Michael Henss

Buddhist Art in Tibet

New Insights
on Ancient Treasures

A Study of Paintings and Sculptures
from 8th to 18th century

Fabri Verlag
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The presentations of this book – following an introduction as Part I – comprises two revised and in extenso enlarged earlier essays:

Part II relates to the important Tibet exhibition and its catalogue: "TIBET - Klöster öffnen ihre Schatzkammern", shown at Museum Villa Hügel, Essen (Germany), August 18th - November 26th, 2006; and Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Berlin, February 21st - May 28th, 2007, published under the same title, in German only, by Hirmer Verlag, München 2006. The text was published in its first version as a review in the Internet-online Journal *www.asianart.com* in late 2007.

Part III is a revised version of the review of "Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet", originally published in Oriental Art (Singapore), vol. XLIX, no. 2, 2003, relating to the book by Ulrich von Schroeder, Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet; 2 Vols, Visual Dharma Publications, Hong Kong 2001.

Cover photo:
Buddha Shakyamuni, gilt copper. Height ca 60cm. 15th century.
Shalu monastery, bSe-sgo-ma Lha-khang. Photo: M. Henss 1987

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Introduction

This book has been prepared with the intention of making available to a wider readership two earlier exhibition and book reviews in a revised and enlarged form with many more illustrations. This format also allows for greater exploration of some of these essential subjects, that were raised by the presented material and by its interpretation. By focussing on sculptures and painting it will provide the reader with some updated insights of our current knowledge on the ancient cultural relics in present-day Tibet and thus is supposed to offer more than just a report on two specific publications.

The review article on the German exhibition and its book *Tibet – Monasteries Open Their Treasure Rooms*, arguably the most significant presentation of Buddhist art from Tibet ever shown in the West, initially was written for *The Tibet Journal* (where it will be soon published in the original unrevised edition), an academic magazine on Tibetan studies edited in Dharamsala, India. This periodical, while it has a high academic reputation, does not, however, reach many more than the inner circle of Tibetologists and their related institutions, and hardly all other, who are particularly interested in the art of the Himalayas. This review was also presented online in late 2007 (www.asianart.com) with some thirty illustrations – but again, likely will be read only by those readers who know and use this internet journal. A more comprehensive version has therefore been requested, all the more since this exhibition presented many important cultural relics, which only have been on public display in the Lhasa Tibet Museum or in the Potala Palace, and in some monasteries often visited by Tibetan, Chinese and foreign pilgrims and travellers.

It has also been suggested that a more detailed discussion of the treasures shown at the German Tibet exhibition in the Villa Hügel Museum, Essen, and in the Museum for Asian Art, Berlin, will be particularly appreciated by the non-German readers of the 664 pages catalogue-handbook, of which no English edition exists.

When ORIENTAL ART (Singapore) had published my review on Ulrich von Schroeder's *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet (2001)* in 2003, it became clear that this once very reputated scholarly Asian art journal did no longer reach the majority of the experts and connoisseurs in the field, and it was hardly known to the special afficionados and collectors of Tibetan Buddhist art. In view of the fundamental importance of this extremely useful reference work, which will be of value for decades to come, a republication cum ADDENDUM may help to provide further assistance and insight.

Since my earlier survey on the cultural monuments in present-day Tibet was published (in German: *Tibet. Die Kulturdenkmäler*. Zürich 1981) soon after foreign visitors had been allowed to visit Lhasa and beyond for the first time (1980), several years passed by before some Western and Chinese books or major articles documented in greater detail the cultural relics in the Central Regions of Ü and Tsang provinces (dbUs and gTsang).

First among the local archaeologists and art historians in Lhasa to explore and publish Tibetan art and architecture was Sonam Wangdü (bSod nams dbang 'dus, see the bibliography – also for other authors and publications – in my forthcoming *The Cultural Monuments of Tibet. The Central Regions*), whose various books and articles from the 1980s and early 1990s were published in Tibetan and Chinese only. – A few years after the then still existing monasteries and palaces had reopened their doors for pilgrims and foreign visitors a first exhibition of precious painted scrolls from the Potala Palace was presented to the public in the Summer Palace of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, accompanied by a well illustrated book, *Xizang Thangka* (Beijing 1985 and 2005). A profusely illustrated Chinese pictorial encyclopedia "Zang Chuan Fojiao Yishu" (Tianjin 1987) and its English translation *Buddhist Art of the Tibetan Plateau* (Hongkong 1988) compiled by Liu Lizhong provided a first more comprehensive visual survey on monasteries and monuments. Roberts Vitali's groundbreaking *Early Temples of Central Tibet* (London 1990) followed as the first modern scholarly book in a

Western language based on field studies and extensively on Tibetan text sources. Vitali documented such hitherto unseen rareties as the earliest monumental image groups still to exist at 'On ke ru Lha khang (8^{th} and 9^{th} century) or the unique late 11^{th} century wall-paintings at Drathang, both not far from Samye monastery. Other chapters are dedicated to the early eastern section of the Lhasa Jokhang, the surviving 11^{th} century statuary at Yemar to the South of Gyantse, the extensive mural cycles at Shalu, which date to the 11^{th} through 14^{th} century, and the Riwoche Kumbum stupa with its painted decorations in the remote western part of southern Tibet, where it was constructed by the multi-talented engineer-mahasiddha Thangtong Gyalpo in 1449-1456.

In the tradition of Guiseppe Tucci the two Italian scholars Erberto Lo Bue and Franco Ricca dedicated their research to the Gyantse monuments. The books written by these authors, *Gyantse Revisited* (Firenze 1990), and *The Great Stupa of Gyantse* (London 1993), have become essential reference works, particularly on the "Kumbum", since then. A useful addition to this subject with many more high-quality plates of the paintings and statues is *The Kumbum of Gyantse Palcho Monastery in Tibet* by Xiong Wenbin (Chengdu 2001), a leading Chinese Tibetologist-art historian at the China Tibetology Research Center in Beijing.

Regettably the essential *Archaeological Studies on Monuments of Tibetan Buddhism* (Zang Zhuan Fojiao Siyuan Kaogu, Beijing 1996) written by Su Bai, a renowned Han-Chinese specialist on Tibetan art, have been published only in Chinese. Illustrated by numerous plans and a number of historical photographs this summa of Su Bai's Tibetan research in art and architecture comprises chapters on the Lhasa Jokhang and Ramoche, Drepung and Sera, the Gyantse Kumbum, Narthang, some monuments in the Lhoka and Shigatse areas, the temples at Tholing and Tsaparang, manuscript collections in the Potala and at Sakya monastery, as well as chapters on Tibetan style paintings along the Silk Road such as Zhangye, Wuwei, Yulin, Dunhuang and in Xixia, or on Yuan dynasty buildings and sculptures like the giant Tibetan Baita stupa

in Beijing (1271-78), or Juyong Guan gate and its relief carvings, which is located further to the North (1342-45). – Other Chinese scholars, including Huo Wei and Li Yongxian, both from Sichuan University, Chengdu, have focussed their rsearch on prehistoric petroglyphs (*Art of Tibetan Rock Paintings,* Xizang Yanhua Yishu. Chengdu 1994), to the tombs of early Tibetan kings (*Research on the Burial Systems in Ancient Tibet*. Xizang Gudai Muzang Zhi Du Yanjiu. Chengdu 1995), or to sPu rgyel dynasty rock carvings in the eastern Tibetan cultural areas of Sichuan province. Other experts like Xu Xinguo, of the Qinghai Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology in Xining, supervised and published burial treasures from excavations in the Tibetan-Han Chinese borderlands in northern Tibet.

Among the younger generation of the Beijing-based Tibetan art historians, to name a few in this selective survey of those conducting research on cultural relics in the TAR, Xie Jisheng (Capital Normal University, Beijing) has published widely on Tibeto-Chinese and Sino-Tibetan art, mainly from Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia and adjacent areas. Zhang Yasha's (Central University for Nationalities, Beijing) investigations on the Yemar sculptures and on the wall-paintings at Drathang presented a remarkable interpretation from a Chinese perspective, though potentially challenged in the light of Western publications (Vitali, Rhie, Heller, Henss).

Püntsok Namgyal (Phun tshogs rNam rgyal), formerly Deputy Director of the Cultural Relics Bureau in Lhasa, is the author of three well-illustrated books with Chinese and English text introductions on the *Tibetan Buddhist Monastery Bkra sis lhum po* (Beijing 1998), *nTho ling Monastery* (Beijing 2001), and on *The Potala Palace* (Beijing 2002). The only more comprehensive documentation on the Potala Palace with 380 illustrations, many excellent plans and details about the large scale renovation in 1989-94 was published in Chinese, *Xizang Budala Gong* (The Potala Palace in Tibet, 2 vols., Beijing 1996), yet does not appear to have come to the knowledge of Western readers. Two more Potala books from China have proved useful for further studies: *Gems of the Potala*

Palace (Budala Gong Mibao, Beijing 1999), a large album with 375 excellent plates and informative captions, and *A Mirror of the Murals in the Potala* (Budala Gong Bihua Yuan Liu, Beijing 2000) with 200 illustrations of the wall-paintings from mid-17th to early 19th century and a readable trilingual text. While only part of the Potala paintings are accessible to the public (and now even less than before), a systematic and comprehensive documentation in text and illustration would be needed, additional to the welldone photographic survey mentioned above. – A recently published album, *"The Celestial Palace of the Gods of Tantric Vajra Yana"* (Beijing 2004) with excellent reproductions of 158 mandala paintings in the Potala Palace collection has hardly become known to Western scholars. It comprises two sets of 45 and 65 mandalas painted at the time of the Eighth Dalai Lama (1758-1804) by the same workshop around 1800, and additional 48 mandalas mostly of the Nyingmapa tradition and dating to the 19th century.

Photographic albums were published in Beijing on *Tashilhünpo Monastery*, edited by Meng Zi and Liao Pin (1993), *Sera Thekchen Ling* (1995), and *Zhaibung Monastery* (Drepung; 1999), with partly "popular" or questionably "scholarly" texts. A well-researched monograph on Nechung monastery by Franco Ricca, *Il Tempio oracolare di gNas chung*, may not have found sufficient readers due to its exclusive Italian language publication (Torino 1999). Monographic studies by the same author do exist for books on Shalu monastery (in collaboration with Lionel Fournier) and on the Gyantse Tsuglagkhang, but have not been published yet. A fine book with masterful photographs of the extraordinary tantric Dzogchen wall-paintings in the small Lu khang sanctuary on the Naga King's Lake (kLu rGyal po mtsho) lake island behind the Potala by Ian Baker and Thomas Laird, *The Dalai Lama's Secret Temple* (London 2000), makes these painted treasures of the 18th century – now in danger of damage and decay and not accessible for the public – literally, or rather visually, more impressive than when standing in front of the original murals.

The cultural relics in Western Tibet were investigated for the first time after Guiseppe Tucci's visit in 1935 and documented in great detail by an archaeological team from Lhasa in 1985. Comprehensive excavations were carried out on the 15th and 16th century temples and vast palace remains at Tsaparang, now mostly known as "Guge", and published in *The Site of the Ancient Guge Kingdom*, 2 vols., Beijing 1991 (in Chinese, with many illustrations and plans). After the excavations and conservation work at the grand "Mandala temple" (brGya rtsa) at Tholing in 1997-99 Püntsok Namgyal published the newly discovered magnificent clay sculptures and wall-paintings that date from the 11th century and later periods not only in the abovementioned Tholing book (2001), but also together with a survey on Tsaparang, the Dungkar and Phiyang cave paintings and some further sites in Guge with precise plans in a Chinese language book (with English summary): *Rescue Report and Conservation Projects on Ali's Cultural Heritages in Xizang Autonomous Region* (Beijing, Science Press, 2002). Most of the 11th or 12th century Kashmir style paintings in the Dung dkar caves northeast of Tholing have been reproduced in a simple picture album together with a short trilingual text; *Donggar Cave Murals in Ngari Prefecture, Tibet, China* (Beijing 1998).

Three German language books, conceived as popular photographic and textual introductions to the previously accessible sites at Tsaparang and Tholing, are *Tsaparang – Tibets grosses Geheimnis* by Jürgen Aschoff (Text) and Helfried Weyer (Freiburg 1987), and the later more scholarly work by Jürgen Aschoff: Tsaparang – Königsstadt in Westtibet. Die vollständigen Berichte des Jesuitenpaters António de Andrade und eine Beschreibung vom heutigen Zustand der Klöster (Neufahrn 1989, 2nd edition Ulm 1997), and *Tibet – Der Weisse Tempel von Tholing* by Ewald Hein and Günther Boelmann (Ratingen 1994). A profusely illustrated survey on the sculptural and painted treasures in ancient Gu ge, with some Chinese and English text, was edited by Huo Wei and Li Yongxian: *The Buddhist Art in Western Tibet* (Chengdu 2001). Roberto Vitali's *Records of Tho ling*, a literary and visual reconstruction of the "Mother" monastery in Guge (Dharamsala 1999), has become the most

important source book for the principal monuments at Tholing and for the entire history of ancient Western Tibet.

Less well known, until Andreas Gruschke's four handbooks on Amdo and Kham became available, were the still surviving, in many cases, the recently reconstructed cultural monuments and relics in Eastern Tibet, the only more systematic reference works on these regions ever published, though they focuss more on monastic buildings and their history than on images: *The Cultural Monuments of Tibet's Outer Provinces: AMDO*. 2 vols (The Qinghai Part of Amdo, and The Gansu and Sichuan Parts of Amdo). Bangkok 2001, and KHAM. 2 vols. (The TAR Part of Kham, and the Qinghai Part of Kham). Bangkok 2004 (see M. Henss, Tibet Journal 2006).

While John Vincent Bellezza's pioneering research on the prehistoric and early historic remains and artefacts "beyond Buddhist art" in the Changtang plains may not belong exactly to this annotated selection of major field studies and related publications of Buddhist imagery preserved in Tibet, his surveys have contributed considerably in a "scholarly no-man's land" to our knowledge about the earliest cultural relics of Tibetan civilization. Though largely illustrated by art objects in Western collections and conceived as a general history of the arts in the entire Tibetan realm Amy Heller's *Tibetan Art* (Milano 1999), published five years after Anne Chayet's substantial, but differently organised *"Art et Archaeologie du Tibet"* with special focus on early archaeological sites and related Chinese research (Paris 1994), has incorporated many research details on the cultural relics in Tibet as they were understood at the time.

Of special importance are the five volumes of *Precious Deposits. Historical Relics of Tibet, China* (Baozang Zhongguo Xizang Lishi Wenwu. Beijing 2000), which include a total of 1252 exquisite colour photographs of 714 objects from all fields of Tibetan art dating from prehistory to the 20th century, which remain preserved in the TAR, many of them never published elsewhere. This extraordinary documentation will no doubt remain a most important reference work for many more dis-

coveries and studies to follow. While the connaissance of Tibetan art and related academic research has been until the 1980s almost exclusively the domaine of European and American experts, Chinese studies and publications in this field did almost not exist or were at least hardly available in the West. When I was invited in 1995 to lecture at the Palace Museum and at the Chinese Tibetology Research Center in Beijing, there were only very few Tibetan art researchers such as Wang Jiapeng, Luo Wenhua or Xiong Wenbin, whereas some other pioneering Tibetologists of the older generation as for example Su Bai or Wang Yao had been already retired. This has changed in a very positive and stimulating way especially thanks to scholars like Huo Wei from Sichuan University in Chengdu, and Xie Jisheng, now Capital Normal University, Beijing, who both were organising the first Beijing International Conference on Tibetan Archaeology and Art in 2002. The second and third of these "Beijing Conferences" in 2004 and 2006 made the new open door policy increasingly successful and attractive for more participants from China, including the TAR and Qinghai, and abroad. The papers (63 in 2006) on archaeology and architecture, painting and sculpture, textiles and metalwork, ritual and secular art, many of them on Tibeto-Chinese and Sino-Tibetan border areas, were given and afterwards published in Chinese or English and have become useful, however not easily obtainable documentary works for latest discoveries and new insights in China and the West. The two-volumes Proceedings of the 2006 conference are supposed to be published in late 2008.

In this context of research and publishing greater attention must be given in the near future to museums in China with major holdings of – mostly inaccessible – Tibetan art from Tibet or made in China. The catalogue of the Tibet Museum in Lhasa (2001), which was opened in 1999 as the first public institution in the TAR presenting Tibet's cultural heritage from prehistoric to modern age, illustrates 45 Tibetan statues, 41 painted scrolls and 6 fabric images mostly dating to the 12^{th} through 18^{th} centuries. The captions don't give any provenance to the individual items and are especially with regard to chronology disputable. Another 33 sculptures and 26 thangkas of the

Lhasa museum were published in the same year in a Beijing exhibition catalogue(see Jinse Baozang 2001), among them a 63 large standing Kashmir style Shakyamuni from Western Tibet of the ca. 11th century and an extraordinary fine painted Kalachakra mandala dating to the early 15th century. Most of this museum's objects had been formerly stored in the Potala and Norbulingka Palaces, where a few were presented in small showrooms to the visitors. Some other exhibits of great historical importance came from the principal monasteries around Lhasa to be brought under government custody after 1959 such as the 50 metres long richly illustrated "Tsurphu Scroll" painted in the imperial workshops at Nanjing in 1407/1408 and given to the Fifth Karmapa, two fabric images in silk embroidery and kesi technique of the Sera founder Jamchen Chöje ('Byams chen Chos rje) manufactured at the Ming court around 1435 and sent to his monastery (Tibet Museum 2001, ill. p.41-43), or a complete luxury armour suit made for the Qianlong emperor and presented in 1757 to Ganden, where it was installed in front of Tsongkhapa's reliquiary stupa until 1966.

Practically all Tibetan style statues and paintings in the P a l a c e M u s e u m, Beijing, which once either were brought by Tibetan hierarchs to the imperial court or manufactured there as "Tibeto-Chinese" art mainly in the 18th century, are not on display and usually not accessible to foreign and even to Chinese scholars. They were published however in China in several books with excellent plates and some Chinese text, the captions in English, with mostly precise data and correct attributions. 217 fine Buddhist images from Kashmir, Pala-India, Nepal, Tibet, and from the imperial ateliers in China of the 8th through 18th centuries, classified after iconography and partly regional provenance,have been compiled by Wang Jiaping *"Iconography and Styles. Tibetan Statues in the Palace Museum"* (2 vols., 2002), while alltogether 260 metal sculptures of this museum are documented in chronological order by the same author in *"Tibetan Buddhist Statues in the Qing Palace"* (2003). Also in the Complete Collection of Treasures in the Qing Palace series were published 263 Tibetan painted scrolls: *"Thangka. Buddhist Paintings of Tibet in the Qing Palace"* (Wang Jiaping; 2003).

Both are principal reference books of Tibetan art in China, to which another very informative book (in Chinese and English) must be added to this survey, compiled by the same academic author-in-charge: *"Cultural Relics of Tibetan Buddhism collected in the Qing Palace"* (1992 and 1998). It is so far the only survey on the highly important temples of esoteric Buddhism and their furnishings in the Forbidden City, which are unfortunately not open, with some rare exceptions, even to specifically interested visitors. The book however presents many illustrations of the interior settings, wall-paintings, thangkas, statues and ritual objects not published elsewhere. –

Next to the historically formed ensemble of Tibetan and Tibet-Chinese Buddhist art and their shrines in the Imperial City comes another treasure-house in this field, the "Lama Temple" Y o n g h e g o n g , which has survived largely undamaged the iconoclasm during the "Cultural Revolution". *"Palace of Harmony"*, a picture album with 465 illustrations (Beijing 1995), is the only more comprehensive modern book after Ferdinand D.Lessing's highly essential but sparsely illustrated "Iconography" of this "Lamaist Cathedral" *(Yung ho kung*. Stockholm 1942; a second volume was never published), of which a new revised Sino-Swedish co-edition will be published in the near future. Totally 176 painted scrolls of the late 18th and 19th century, with very few exceptions all executed in the imperial ateliers, are reproduced in *"The Treasured Thangkas on Yonghegong Palace"* (Chinese and English text; Beijing 1994, and, with a partly different selection, 1998, and as *"Beautiful Tangka Paintings in Yonghegong"* in 2002) though accompanied by brief captions only. This considerable fundus of later Tibetan style paintings at the Qing Court has so far hardly been utilized, at least outside China, for scholarly research.

In a similar way were published 121 *"Buddhist Statues in Yonghegong"* (Beijing 2002), of which twenty-five images are of Tibetan or Kashmirian origin.

Although the buildings in the Tibeto-Chinese architectural style are still there, a great deal of the original 18th century inventory in the temples at

the former imperial summer residence at Chengde (Bishushan Zhuang, 1703-1792) was looted in the 19th and early 20th century. What has been left from those rich treasures of Tibetan style Buddhist art once produced at the Court under the Qianlong emperor, given from the imperial collections or by Mongolian chieftains, is usually not on display, instead well documented for about 90 items in a Taiwanese exhibition catalogue, *"Buddhist Art from Rehol*. Tibetan Buddhist Images and Ritual Objects from the Qing Dynasty Summer Palace at Chengde", edited by Hung Shih Chang and Jessica Hsu (Taipei 1999). About one third of these images and objects can be also found in a beautiful picture album with knowledgeable text chapters in Chinese and English: *"The Qing Emperors and the Chengde Mountain Resort"*, edited by the Cultural Relic Bureau of Chengde (Beijing 2003).

The by far richest depot of Tibetan images in China is the new Beijing Capital Museum (opened in 2006) with about 10'000 Tibetan and Tibeto-Chinese statues, all brought to Beijing during the "Cultural Revolution" in 1966-1976, of which less than a hundred are on display. A selection of 187 pieces including Nepal, Kashmir and Pala-India was published in *"Buddhist Statues. Gems of Beijing Cultural Relics Series"*, edited by Han Yong and Huang Chunhe (Beijing Wenwu Jingcui Daxi, 2001). Until today the major part of this huge collection is still unpacked and even largely unknown to the curator-in-charge, Huang Chunhe, co-author of the above publication. The hidden treasures of the Capital Museum are no doubt a most promising and challenging reservoir for the study of Tibetan art in the years to come (see also Selected Works of Ancient Buddhist Statues 2005).

More unseen cultural relics of Tibet, all brought to China after 1959 or 1966, are kept in the National Museum of China at Tiananmen Square, formerly the "Museum of Chinese History", which is now under complete reconstruction until circa 2010. 300 Tibetan style statues of this "storage collection" were impressively published in two large volumes: *"Tibetan Buddhist Gilt Images in China"* (Zhongguo Zangchuan Fojiao Jintong, 2001), with detail photos of Tibetan inscrip-

tions and quite informative Chinese texts, all organised in iconographic groups. Another 193 "unknown" images of this museum have been selected for a recent Chinese text catalogue with 510 superb photos from different views of each figure: *"Masterpieces of Buddhist Sculpture"* (Fo Zaoxiang Yishu Jingcui, 2006). – A newly established museum collection is scheduled to open its doors in the China Tibetology Research Center, Beijing, toward the end of 2008.

This short introductionary survey on present research and recent publications in the field of Tibetan art in China and the West, and on some principal institutions preserving and displaying the sacred images of Tibet, would be incomplete if not last, but not least at all the Rubin Museum of Art (RMA) in New York would be mentioned here. With its now 2000 Tibetan and related artefacts of all categories, Himalayan areas and periods, many of them of first importance and quality, its numerous publications and various research activities the RMA became soon after its opening in 2004 the principal center for the art and culture of the Tibetan realm.

Closely affiliated with the RMA and actually originating from this institution (before the present museum was physically existing) is the most useful *Himalayan Art Website* directed by Jeff Watt, a comprehensive visual database and a virtual museum of Himalayan art with nearly 20'000 images of paintings, sculptures, ritual and secular objects from over 30 public and 60 private collections worldwide, a unique source for the study of Tibetan and related arts! (www.himalayanart.org). The same applies for the *"Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center"*, an invaluable textual database under the academic supervision of Gene Smith, dedicated as well to promoting research on the Tibetan cultural heritage by making its literary tradition widely available in digitalised form (www.tbrc.org).

Important painted and sculptural treasures in Tibet still await exploration, in places such as Tashi Lhünpo or Sakya due to restrictions of access and investigation. Detailed and richly illustrated monographic publications would be needed for the Potala Palace, for Samye and Tashi Lhünpo, Sakya and Shalu, for Kumbum monastery and Labrang Tashi-

kyil, for the grand wall-painting cycles or for the "unknown" treasures of Tibetan ritual art. Other sites and relics have not yet received proper attention such as the surviving original sections of the 13th century mandala paintings and the enormous quantity of superb metal images and manuscripts at Sakya, the "image galleries" with hundreds of ancient statues at Tashi Lhünpo, the thus far apparently unnoticed earliest Chinese style wall-paintings of the foundation period at Drepung, the fine 16th century siddha paintings at Yamdrog Talung, the unique and well-preserved murals at Jonang Püntsoling, which date to the early 17th century, or the stylistically so advanced 15th century paintings at Gongkar Chöde. In a way, these are all hidden treasures of the best that has been produced in the past, and that even now remain preserved for the future.

My own forthcoming *Cultural Monuments of Tibet (*The *Central Regions)* is intented to fill some gaps after many years of research in Tibet and at home. A few results of this work too, and perhaps a few more questions that have arisen from these studies also appeared to be useful for this "review book", which would not have been realised without the great interest and support of my publisher and friend Jürgen Aschoff. And to all those, who contributed to these "new insights on ancient treasures" in Tibet.

Zürich, Oktober 2008
Michael Henss

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M. H.

TIBET
”Monasteries Open Their Treasure Rooms”

A review on the exhibition and its book [1]

As the title of this exceptional presentation of Tibetan art announces, monasteries and other institutions like the Potala and the Norbulingka palaces in Lhasa have opened their doors – in many cases for the first time – and sent their treasures abroad, together with cultural relics now preserved in the Tibet Museum at Lhasa, which was established as the first museum in Tibet (Tibetan Autonomous Region, TAR) only six years ago[2].

Organised by the “Kulturstiftung Ruhr” (Cultural Foundation of Ruhr District) in the city of Essen, a leading privately sponsored cultural institution in Germany for over 40 years known for major exhibitions of Western and non-European art, in cooperation with the Administrative Bureau of Cultural Relics of the TAR in Lhasa, this pioneering enterprise has turned out to be a milestone in presenting Tibetan art on a high level, comparable in quantity and quality with other exhibition landmarks such as “Wisdom and Compassion” in San Francisco, New York, London, Bonn, Barcelona, Japan, and Taipei (1991-1998), and the

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[1] Museum Villa Hügel, Essen, Germany, August 18 – November 26, 2006; Museum for East Asian Art, Berlin, February 21 - May 28, 2007. Catalogue publication (in German only): TIBET – Klöster öffnen ihre Schatzkammern, edited by Jeong-hee Lee-Kalisch, 664 p., 438 colour and 17 b/w-illustrations, Hirmer Verlag München 2006

[2] See M.Henss, The New Tibet Museum in Lhasa. In: Orientations, Hongkong, February 2000, p. 62-65

“Himalayas – An Aesthetic Adventure” in Chicago and Washington (2003).[3]

The scholarly and administrative organisation of the German exhibition, including all negotations with the Tibetan and Chinese authorities in Lhasa and Beijing, was in the hands of a team led by Professor Jeong-hee Lee-Kalisch, chair of the Institute for East-Asian Art History at Berlin University (FU), which curated exhibitions on Chinese art (under the leadership of Prof. Roger Goepper) and on Korean art in 1995 and 1999.

The exhibition under review had an American forerunner quite recently: “Tibet - Treasures from the Roof of the World”, which was organised by the Bowers Museum of Cultural Art in California in 2003 and successively shown by the Houston Museum of Natural Science, the Rubin Museum of Art in New York, and by the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco. Tibetan art treasures from the TAR had been presented for the first time in Europe in two small exhibitions organised by the Musée National d’Histoire Naturelle in Paris in 1987 and by the Rinascente department store in Milano in 1994, where four and eight objects respectively of the current German exhibition were shown.[4] While the Bowers exhibition was exclusively based on loans from public institutions in Lhasa like the Tibet Museum **(fig. 1)** and the Potala and Norbulingka Palaces, Essen’s Villa Hügel Museum had the privilege of presenting for the first time some 25 religious works of art (11 catalogue entries) from five monasteries in Tibet, where they are still on display and ritually used. Great masterpieces, 14 important cultural relics, came only from

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[3] See M.Rhie/R.Thurman, Wisdom and Compassion. The Sacred Art of Tibet. New York 1991 and 1996 (German ed. 1996); P.Pal (Ed.), Himalayas. An Aesthetic Adventure. Chicago and Berkeley 2003.

[4] See The Bowers Museum of Cultural Art (Ed.): Tibet – Treasures from the Roof of the World. Santa Ana 2003, and a review by Terese Tse Bartholomew in: Orientations, October 2003, p.65-67. Trésors du Tibet. Région Autonome du Tibet, Chine. Paris 1987; Tesori del Tibet. Oggeti d’arte dai Monasteri di Lhasa. Milano 1994 (exhibits from public institutions in Lhasa; text by E. Lo Bue).

two of these five monasteries, Mindröl Ling and Shalu. If one follows the comments of the German organisers the monastic institutions of Mindröl Ling, Gyantse, Shalu, Tashi Lhünpo and Sakya have been very cooperative and even proud to have some of their treasures shown in the far West. However one cannot overlook some discrepancy between the proud title of the exhibition ("Monasteries Open Their Treasure Rooms") and the fact that most of the objects are owned by museums (Tibet Museum, Potala Palace, Norbulingka Palace, Yarlung Museum) rather than monasteries.

Seven monastic institutions did not open their doors to give loans abroad (Jokhang, Sera, Drepung, Nyethang, Yumbu Lakhar, Gongkar Chöde, Samye). Three very important cultural relics never seen before by foreigners came on loan from the Yarlung Museum at Tsethang, which has not been open to visitors during the last years. Not less than 45 paintings, statues, and ritual instruments are shown from the Potala Palace collection, another 18 objects are from the Norbulingka property; while 51 items were given by the Tibet Museum. As claimed in the catalogue the organisers did, however, "with respect to the believers", not request works of art which are closely associated with the daily ritual praxis: A statement made maybe for reasons of prestige to which one may add that those items, even if requested, would not have been given on loan anyway. Regrettably all circa 60 objects from the Tibet Museum and from the Norbulingka Palace were given abroad without details about the former provenance, which at least in most cases is certainly known to the cultural relics authorities in Lhasa. And one also wonders where the magnificent brocade banner with the Yongle reign mark (no. 53 in the catalogue), one of the highlights in the exhibition, had been preserved previously.

Of the total of 138 objects, 33 were never seen before except by a few local experts, either in the original object or via publication. About 42 items, which is nearly one third of the whole exhibition, where never published before, and a total of 112 exhibits are shown for the first time outside China. Most of the loans, 85 pieces, cannot even be seen at their

proper place in Tibet! These are impressive figures, and the inclusion of these rare and inaccessible objects is a credit to the considerate and successful selection policy of the Germans. The presence of these rare objects provide a contrast with the Bowers Museum exhibition, where the selection was apparently more determined by what had been offered by the Lhasa authorities.

The Essen exhibition, which was seen by 196,000 visitors before it moved to Berlin, has been clearly defined as an art exhibition with focus on aesthetic quality and art historical importance. The works of art were not just presented as an assembly of isolated aesthetic highlights; instead they were quite logically arranged within their historical and iconographical context.

The objects in the exhibition cover fifteen centuries, from a Chinese gilt bronze Shakyamuni statuette dated to 473 and brought at an unknown period to the Potala Palace to the Medicine thangka copies of the 1920s now kept in the Lhasa Museum. Thus this art historical survey of Tibet ends sometime before 1950 and does not include the period and person of the 14th Dalai Lama. This has been criticized by many visitors to the exhibition, whose idea and image of Tibet are essentially determined by this foremost and highly appreciated Tibetan representative of our days. For obvious reasons the devastations of countless historical relics during the so-called "Cultural Revolution" in the whole of China and Tibet between 1966 and 1976 were not documented in Essen and Berlin, but are still very tragically in mind, not only in the West. And those eminent losses cannot be covered by all the exhibited treasures, which fortunately have survived, for the religious benefit, daily use, study, and aesthetic pleasure of Tibetans in Tibet, in the diaspora, and abroad. That an exhibition of Tibetan cultural relics from present-day China shown in the West will focus on "Buddhist Art and Religion" alone is self-explaining. And self-restriction in this sense has been practised in Essen and in Lhasa, even at the Villa Hügel vernissage, when in an informal and discrete ambiance no official speeches and statements were given and the officials from Lhasa and Beijing were hardly seen. When this

exhibition, which has been under the patronage of the Chinese Prime Minister Hu Jintao and of the German Federal President Horst Köhler, was opened in its second venue on February 20, 2007, in the Museum for Asian Art at Berlin (director Prof. Willibald Veit and Dr. Herbert Butz for the East Asian department) in a more official way, welcome addresses were given by the President of the German House of Parliament, Norbert Lammert, by China's ambassor Ma Canrong, and by Nyima Tsering, director of the Administrative Bureau of Cultural Relics of the TAR in Lhasa.

The homemade German texts in the show and in the catalogue-handbook get along without any overall guidelines except those of academic relevance and correctness toward the individual object and its cultural context. Such insight and discipline are not self-evident here and there and may give rise to criticism on both sides. The German organisers, one may argue, had no other choice in order to get this exhibition done. Yet they were intelligent enough to pay proper respect to the needs and feasibilities of the generous lenders and to get a maximum back. According to his own words the director of the Villa Hügel Cultural Foundation, Prof. Paul Vogt, was also well aware of the eventual political aspects and related discussions in this regard. But he noted: "Nevertheless Tibetans in exile supported actively the planning and preparations of this exhibition.

Other came to pay their respect to these ritual images and were pleased to see such significant visual manifestations of their faith, which have been sent from Tibetan monasteries or institutions, and not from the museums in the West. I am convinced that the public presentation of these religious objects and the scientific study and publication of Tibet's cultural heritage will contribute to their preservation and safeguarding". And the German Federal President justified his patronage with similar arguments: "This exhibition does not claim to present the history of Tibet until our days, however it shows religious works of art – often still in active ritual use – owned by public institutions and by monasteries. Thus they are part of a living culture and of the identity of the Tibetan people.

The exhibition gives a chance for a cultural and spiritual mission. We believe that the presentation of Tibet's cultural relics is also a contribution to emphasize and to support the autonomy of Tibet".

In view of the different thematic categories the selection is well balanced between images and non-figural items, with 59 statues from miniature to life-size, 25 thangka paintings and six fabric images (kesi, silk embroidery), some 54 ritual objects, four sacred books, and twelve historical and other secular objects.

It was not the intention of this exhibition to illustrate and document the cultural history of Tibet or to give a visual introduction to the "Land of Snows". Yet many chapters of Tibet's religious and cultural history are covered by the five sections of the exhibition plan anyway.

The visitor – and the reader of the heavy (over 4 kg!) catalogue handbook – begins his kora ("bsko ra"; ritual circumambulation) in front of the early Indian and Tibetan Lamdre (lam 'bras) lineage masters of the Sakyapa tradition, an at least most impressive "path and result" and no doubt a brilliant mental and highly eyecatching introduction into the visual dharma of Tibet. The second part, like all the other sections decorated in a colour scheme featuring one of the symbolic colours of the Five Buddha Families or of the five elements, is dedicated to the threefold world of the dharma – body, speech, and mind: to the principal deities and teachers, the sacred scriptures, and to the stupa, the aniconic symbol of the Awakened One. The third part follows at the center of the exhibition: the mandalas, meditational emblems of microcosm and macrocosm, and then the fourth, a large section comprising a rather broad and not always convincing entity of "Rulers and Monasteries" with images of religious (and secular) sovereigns and their emblemata, various ritual implements and altar furnishings, which one would have prefered to see, however, in a more condensed and systematic context of a "temple iconology". The last section of the exhibition - dedicated to Tibetan medicine - appears more like a rather arbitrary appendix (of an

en-vogue subject) rather than an essential chapter of the fivefold path to enlightenment on the exhibition's ambitious path of circumambulation.

The aesthetic presentation in the huge, over a hundred years old building, once the residence of the famous Krupp family, a leading industrial "institution" in 20th century Germany, was very impressive. The spacious halls were skilfully transformed into several compartments with the objects shown in a decent setting of tranquilizing colours and concentrated light. In reasonable balance with the overall design additional texts provide sufficient information for the exhibits, much to the benefit of the visitor, who in other cases like the current exhibition on "The Dalai Lamas" in Zürich (Ethnographic Museum) and Rotterdam (World Museum) is solely and "compulsorily" guided around by audiophones. The high standard of the selection could not be realised in every field, presumably due to restrictions of the lenders of this exhibition. This is specifically evident for the painted Mandalas, which are represented only on a low quality level (nos. 68, 72, 73, 78), although two exceptional 15th century Kalacakra Mandalas are kept in the Potala Palace and in the Lhasa Museum. Only a few other items might be considered dispensable, such as the paintings nos. 43, 46 and 58, or the statues nos. 30, 51, 52 and 66 along with some ritual objects such as nos. 90, 91, 93 and 101 did not match the excellent overall quality level of this exhibition.

In the following annotations I will mainly focus on those works of art, which by their outstanding artistic quality, their specific iconographic interest, or by characteristics inviting scholarly dispute may deserve some special attention.

The ten life-size Lamdre masters in gilt copper repoussé technique from Mindröl Ling (sMin grol gling) monastery are no doubt among the most fascinating statues to exist in present-day Tibet **(fig. 2, 3).** Though closely connected with the Sakya tradition the complete set of 21 images, from Buddha Vajradhara to the Shalu lotsawa Chökyong Sangpo (Chos skyong bZang po, 1441-1528), was moved from the deserted Drathang (Gra thang) monastery shortly before my first visit

there in 1992 to the Nyingma seat at Mindröl Ling, where they are now installed in the heart of the dukhang. In style and technique these unique monumental yogins and teachers indicate a Newari atelier, which is confirmed by a Nāgarī inscription on one of the exposed images. It is believed that they were commissioned by Chökyong Sangpo, who came from Shalu to central Tibet in 1483 to become later on abbot of Drathang, where he introduced the Lamdre teachings of the Sakya tradition.

At Gong dkar Chos sde he may have been in contact with the genius artist mKhyen brtse or with his atelier, whose unorthodox modern painting style and some related nearly lifesize and very realistic statues of Lamdre masters (as they are mentioned for an unidentifiable site in 1919)[5], were probably not without influence on the Nepalese artists.We are informed by the texts (Zhva lu gdan rabs) that Chökyong Sangpo's disciple Ön Lodrö Pekar ('On bLo gros Pad dkar) commissioned a precious image of his master after the death of the latter, which might be identical with the last one of the 21 statues at Mindröl Ling. Whether all other repoussé figures of this cycle were still made during the lifetime of Chökyong Sangpo remains purely speculative.[6] It is, however, more likely that the complete set was produced after the Shalu Lotsawa had died in 1528. Thus a date to the second quarter of the 16th century does not only correspond better to the general characteristics of a 16th century style like it is illustrated for example by the magnificent Siddha murals at Yamdrog Talung (Ya 'brog sTag lung) monastery, but would be also in accordance with the dating of the exhibition catalogue ("first half of 16th century"), whose 33(!) pages on this subject present an extremely detailed documentation on the Sakya school in Tibet and its

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[5] p.122. See Kah-thog Si tu Chos kyi rGya mtsho (1880-1925): Gangs ljongs dbus gtsang gnas bskor lam yig nor bu zla shel gyi se mo do (An Account of a Pilgrimage to Ü-Tsang in the Land of Snows entitled Necklace of Moon Crystal), Palampur 1972, p. 156ff.

[6] U.von Schroeder, Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet. Hongkong 2001, vol.II, p. 972ff.: "after 1495".

essential Lamdre tradition, as well as on the various iconographic, stylistic, art historical, and technical aspects of the Mindröl Ling statues (p.119-151).[7] In his precise and substantial commentaries, Andreas Kretschmar clearly identified the Mindröl Ling group with the oral Vajra verses tradition of the Lamdre system from the early beginnings until Zhang ston Chos 'bar (1053-1135, no.7 of the exhibition), which were written down for the first time by the third Sakya throne-holder Sa chen Kun dga' sNying po (1092-1158, no.8).

By reviewing the sculptural highlights of the exhibition via some kind of chronological order, I do not follow here the "iconological" system of the overall presentation, which, displaying the objects within the specific context of function and meaning, is generally the best way to introduce a foreign culture of complex and difficult symbolism to a greater public. Among the early metal sculptures shown in the exhibition, two male figures of unknown iconography from the Potala Palace are labelled as "Zhang zhung Kingdom of Western Tibet, 8th century" (no.40), an attribution which is solely based on von Schroeder's problematic "identification" of some twelve predominantly Buddhist (!) statuettes discovered by him in the Potala Palace and at a few other sites in Tibet in the 1990s.[8] In her text to this entry Marit Kretschmar (MK) refers mainly – and correctly – to the early "Central Asian" costumes of these images, a

[7] This Lamdre cycle recalls the wellknown painted Ngor-Sakya lineage series of probably once 34 thangkas (over 20 have survived in Western public and private collections) from Buddha Vajradhara until the 14th Ngor abbot Nam mkha' dpal bzang (r.until 1595, d.1603) dating to around 1600, of which the first eighteen images are iconographically identical with the Mindröl Ling statues. This is based on an unpublished preliminary list reconstructing this thangka series by David Jackson (1996) and on the identification of the last lama in the set, the 14th Ngor abbot, by Amy Heller in: Pal 2003, op.cit., p.295).

[8] von Schroeder 2001, op.cit., p.771-791, plate 185 A-B, see for a discussion of his "Zhang zhung arguments" and for some serious doubts about a Buddhist (!) art production in a "Zhang zhung Kingdom of Western Tibet" M.Henss, Review Article on "Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet" by U.von Schroeder(Hongkong 2001), in Oriental Art, no.2/2003 (p.49-60), p.55-56.

general feature however of early Tibetan figures without any priority for western Tibet (where in the pre-11th century period the "Kashmirian mode" had been the only stylistic convention anyway). This may just confirm the early date of these enigmatic statues, which hardly can be understood as "donors" (von Schroeder).

Until recently no cultural or artistic profile could be established for a western Tibetan Zhang zhung kingdom, of which no reliable archaeological data and clues do exist. Neither during the Tucci expeditions in the 1930s or the Chinese excavations at Tsaparang and Tholing in the 1980s and 1990s, nor in the course of the extensive field surveys in the western Changthang plains by John V.Bellezza and from the first archaeological investigations at Khyung lung dNgul mkhar by Professor Li Yongxian in 2004 have any similar artefacts come to light, which would support the hypothesis of a specific group of "Zhang zhung art". And how much sense does it make to find Buddhist art production in a Bon-dominated kingdom, which by mere chronology did not exist anymore at the time when these images – on stylistic grounds – must have been manufactured? I also have doubts whether the twelve "Zhang zhung images" (as suggested by von Schroeder), partly cast in copper and partly in brass, make a homogenous "oeuvre". Some of them belong to the style of Greater Kashmir, while others are more related to an early Newar-Central Tibetan style of the sPu rgyal dynasty period.[9] One may argue that Buddhism had found its way to the eastern borderlands of Greater Kashmir, which is indeed well-documented by several early rock-carved images in Ladakh, Zanskar, Baltistan and Gilgit, and assume, as von Schroeder does, that the "origins" for these statues might be sought for in "the Tibetan dominions in the western parts of Central Asia". Yet the "origins" only? Or as another construct would make us

[9] von Schroeder 2001, op.cit., p.778-791 and p.741-769. On Khyung lung and Zhang zhung see also M.Henss, Notes on Khyung lung in Ancient Zhang zhung, Western Tibet. In: Studies in Sino-Tibetan Art. Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Tibetan Archaeology and Art, Beijing, September 3-6, 2004, Beijing 2006, p.1-26.

believe: could these images have been "commissioned" by the Zhang zhung rulers from those "western" areas? Wouldn't it be less speculative to associate them with the Tibetan borderlands in the West around the 8th century, with "Bolorian Tibet" or with "Little Bolor" (Tib. Bru zha), which was conquered by the Tibetans in 735?

At least four of the six exhibited Kashmir style metal images are of exceptional quality and art historical importance. An additional advantage of the thoughtful selection is their wide chronological range over a period of circa 600 years, a rare chance to study the earliest and the latest Kashmir styles from about 600 to 1200 at the same time. The most impressive Kashmiri "guest" from the Potala Palace and one of only two existing early Kashmiri statues of this size and quality is a 94 cm tall standing Shakyamuni inscribed at the base in Sanskrit as having been donated by the monk Priyaruci and King Durlabha (-vardhana, r.circa 625-637), which allows a dating of the statue to circa 620-630 (no.13; **fig. 4).** Almost 400 years later, sometime between 998 and 1016, when it had apparently been brought from Kashmir to western Tibet, a Tibetan inscription was added describing this Buddha as the personal meditational image of the royal prince Nāgarāja (988-1026), son of the lama-king Ye shes 'Od of Gu ge, who was constructing at that time the great "mandala temple" at Tholing. With the exception of the much later standing Buddha in the Cleveland Museum of Art (datable to circa 1000) and a similar statue in the Lindenmuseum Stuttgart, Germany, no monumental Kashmir style image of this importance has been shown in the West before.

Another significant 63 cm high gilt copper statue of a standing Shakyamuni from the Lhasa Museum **(fig. 5**) can be regarded in my opinion as a later, circa 11th century "Gu ge interpretation" by a Tibetan artist of the classical earlier Kashmir Buddha type (no.14: "Kashmir, 7th/8th century"). While the attribution of Kashmir style images from the 10th through the 12th centuries either to a Kashmiri or to a Tibetan artist is in many cases difficult or even impossible, the Lhasa Buddha indicates in comparison with nos.11 and 13 as well as with other "genuine" early

Kashmir statuary a distinctive local "Gu ge design": the more schematic "linear" garment style ("Faltenstil") of the robe as well as the proportions of the head and its facial features seem to be general characteristics of Western Himalayan figural art between Gu ge and sPi ti during the 11th and 12th century, compared with nos.11 and 13 or other early statues of "genuine" Kashmiri provenance.[10]

Coming back to the original Kashmir style images of the 7th and 8th centuries, the seated Buddha in dharmacakra-mudra no.11 is another exhibition highlight from Greater Kashmir, whose artistic production had an essential influence on Tibetan art during the formative phase between circa 1000 and 1200, primarily and rather exclusively in the western regions. From here these images may have been brought at that time and in later periods (probably a few during the Tibetan military campaigns in the 7th or 8th century) to central Tibet, where however their distinctive style did not have a substantial impact on statuary and painting, which increasingly came under the influence of the great Pala-Indian and Nepalese traditions. The Lhasa museum image no.11 is one of the finest seated Buddhas of an "antique" Gandharan-Swat Valley style lineage, with silver and copper inlays of Central Asian textile patterns. Similar sculptures are preserved in Western public and private collections and in the Yonghegong temple at Beijing[11], and in remote places in western Tibet, where even "unknown" masterpieces of an early Kashmir style have survived like at Gu ru rGyam cave sanctuary in ancient Khyung lung valley, to be properly rediscovered and hopefully published in the near future. Even at much more prominent places like the Ramoche in Lhasa, exceptional Kashmirian statues are preserved

[10] Compare for example Huo Wei/Li Yongxian, The Buddhist Art in Western Tibet. Chengdu 2001, fig.193 (Western Tibet), 195 (Kashmir). See M. Henss, Buddhist Metal Images of Western Tibet, ca.1000-1500 A.D.: Historical Evidence, Stylistic Consideration, and Modern Myths. The Tibet Journal, vol.XXVII, no.3/4, 2002, p.23-82. The Buddha image no.14 was already published in: Jinse Baozang. Xizang lishi wenwu Xuancui, Beijing 2001, p.146f.

[11] See P. Pal, Himalayas 2003, op.cit., no.62, 68; Priceless Treasures. Beijing 1999, no. 26.

such as an (unpublished) 87 cm tall crowned Buddha of the circa 11th century, a period when probably most of the Kashmir style images were brought to central Tibet **(fig. 6).**

A very interesting six-armed Avalokiteshvara from the Potala Palace represents the late Kashmir style of around 1200 (no.35). However, I cannot agree with the catalogue text, according to which this image would not be "a Kashmiri work in the real sense", yet with "influences from other regions". From which regions? Was there ever any distinctive influence from the neighbouring regions on the art of Kashmir except of the Indian Gupta and the Gandharan-Swat mainstream? Has ever a Kashmiri statue been associated with the highly refined late Kashmir style of the Alchi murals, where similar floral ornaments and flamed patterns like on the throne and nimbus of the Potala statue do occur?[12] And can late or latest elements of an over five hundred years old artistic tradition (which is subject to change!) be interpreted as a foreign vocabulary?

Early Chinese Buddhist bronzes like the Shakyamuni figure no.12 from the Potala Palace (dated to the year 473) were no doubt brought to Tibet during the 7th and 8th century, be it with the Tang princesses Wencheng Kongjo (Tib. Mun sheng Kong co) in 641 and Jincheng Kongjo (Kim sheng Kong co) in 710, be it with Chinese masters and missions in the successive years. Unlike Buddhist images from Nepal and India and comparable with the occasional "imports" of 8th and 9th century Kashmir style statues, those Chinese sculptures had no influence on contemporary and later Tibetan art. There are at least another twelve Chinese Northern Wei through Tang dynasty bronzes preserved in the Potala Palace and Jokhang collections and seven statuettes dating to the Tang period in Tashi Lhünpo monastery.

[12] See R. Goepper. Alchi. Ladakh's Hidden Buddhist Sanctuary. The Sumtsek. London 1996.

The Pala-Indian predecessors of Tibetan art are represented by one of the most beautiful and important masterpieces of the entire exhibition: the life-size standing Bodhisattva Maitreya from the Li ma lha khang in the Potala Palace collection (no.32; height: 154cm; **figs. 7, 8, 9, compare with fig. 11**). Before 1991, the year when these chapels were opened to the public for the first time, this exceptional 12th century brass statue virtually did not exist for pious pilgrims and experienced experts. Since then this most beautiful monumental Indian sculpture in Tibet has been largely covered by silk brocades. Thus the real grandeur of this Pala style statue with all the ornamental silver and copper inlays on the dhoti and the turquoise and other precious stones indicating a manufacture for a Tibetan patron was only revealed in the exhibition.

The image was either produced in eastern India (as it is known for example for a painted scroll commissioned by Atisha) or, probably more likely, in Tibet by an Indian artist. At least two more monumental statues of the 11th and 12th centuries in a private property and at sNye thang monastery **(fig. 10)**[13] document clearly the presence, and as I believe, the production of large Indian metal statues in Tibet. And one wonders about the strict objections of some Tibetologists against a possible Indian authorship of a few early thangkas found in Tibet[14] **(fig. 121).**

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[13] See Rhie/Thurman 1996, op.cit., no.171 ("Central Regions, Tibet"), and for the certainly later Pala style Maitreya at sNye thang M. Henss, Himalayan Metal Images of Five Centuries: Recent Discoveries in Tibet. Orientations, June 1996, fig.20. See in this context for a monumental Pala-inspired Tibetan bodhisattva statue of the 12th century Pal 2003, no.108 ("9th century"!).

[14] While the extensive discussion on the "Indian" or "Tibetan" origin of the Green Tara in the Ford Collection (Baltimore) is certainly a delicate issue (although in my opinion being more in favour of an Indian artist), at least a fragmentary 11th century painted scroll of the debating Maitreya and Manjushri found in Tibet must be attributed with much likelihood to an artist from India, see Tibet. Arte e spiritualità, ed. by S.B. Deotto, Milano 1999, plate p.101, and S.Kossak, Pala Painting and the Tibetan Variant of the Pala Style, The Tibet Journal, vol.27, 3/4, 2002, p.6, fig.6.

Without going here into all details a few considerations may sum up and bring the dispute further about the chronology and „Indo-Tibetan“ provenance of the „F o r d –T a r a “ (size: 122x80 cm), one of the most significant early Tibetan style paintings:

1. There can be no doubt that this Khadiravaṇi (“dwelling in the magical Acacia forest”) cum Aṣṭamahābhaya (“protecting from the Eight Great Perils”) Tārā was originally commissioned and painted in the Kadampa milieu of Reding (Rwa sgreng) monastery, though apparently for another monastic site of this school nearby.

2. It seems difficult not to accept a date of this famous painting between ca. 1164 and 1175 in view of some historical clues given according to Dan Martin’s reading and interpretation of the inscription on the back of the thangka (cf. Martin 2001).

3. The dating of the Ford Tara to the third quarter of the 12th century appears to be supported by certain stylistic features like the drawing of the physiognomies and the rather slim and elegant figural proportions compared with earlier Tibetan paintings as they are preserved in Shalu, Yemar or Drathang (compare here for a example a Green Tara at the southern wall). And likewise does the painting under review not show sufficient similarities in composition, figural style and color palette with the painting fragment of the debating Maitreya and Manjushri (see note 14), which might be, at least from a more strictly Tibetan perspective, on stylistic, iconographic and probably also on historical grounds the so far only safely attributable Indian painting from Tibet dating to the 11th century. A date of the Ford Tara to sometime after the mid-12th century would be further supported by the only other closely related painting – in iconography, style, and size (120x80 cm!) – to exist: a thangka of the three-headed and eight-armed Aṣṭabhuja śyāma Tara (according to the system of Atisha) of excellent quality, however in problematic condition, which I have seen at Reding (!) monastery in 1990 and 2001 and whose various stylistic characteristics point out rather clearly to the second half of the 12th century (see for a full-page colour repro-

duction: Xizang Yishu. Hui Hua Juan [The Art of Tibet. Vol. Painting], Shanghai 1991, pl.197).

4. Stylistic differences and variations in comparism with other contemporary Tibetan paintings or on one and the same individual painting are characteristic for the formative early period of Tibetan art in the 11th and 12th century. Specific Indian style elements like for example the facial features of the two attendants at both sides of central figure can be also found on some other thangkas, which are clearly painted by Tibetan artists in the 12th century.

5. Nevertheless, inscriptional, literary and iconographic data not providing any support for an Indian origin of the painting do not necessarily rule out the manufacture by an Indian artist (in Tibet).

6. That Buddhist paintings and sculptures were commissioned or acquired by Tibetans in India and brought to Tibet next to all pious pilgrims' souvenirs, or produced in Tibet by Indian artists for Tibetan patrons is illustrated and documented by several preserved images and textual references (palm-leaf manuscripts, Debating Maitreya and Manjushri, gilt copper and brass statues in Nyethang monastery and in the Potala Palace, etc.). The extensive reconstruction of Talung monastery not far from Reding was supervised in the early 13th century by an Indian artist (Sörensen/Hazod 2007, p.743); see also note 137).

7. A primarily textual or philological approach to Tibetan Buddhist art without proper (!) art historical analysis and evidence can be misleading such as for example "stylistic comparisons" of the Ford Tara with much later fabric images or painted monk portraits from sTag lung monastery (Martin 2001). And in many though certainly not all cases may styles, when one looks carefully, be taken as rather conclusive evidence in absence of other indications!

8. Finally, in order to sum up and to protect the reader on behalf of this Tara from the Eight Great Fears when not being able to accept these eight conclusions, we may suggest the "middle way": the Ford-

> Tara was probably painted around ca. 1170 at Reding monastery by a Tibetan atelier, maybe in collaboration with a leading artist from India or at least under the distinctive influence of Indian Pala paintings as they were no doubt occasionally brought to or produced in Tibet.

Just three examples of comparable Indian stone and metal sculpture may prove what has not been seen in the catalogue text: a superb 11th century stone torso of a female figure in the Delhi National Museum **(fig. 11),** a Tara stele in the Indian Museum at Calcutta dated to 1074, and a Kurkihar Avalokiteshvara in the Patna Museum of the late 11th or early 12th century.[15]

One cannot help but regret when looking at this Sambhogakāya-Maitreya, that he does not reveal his "true" unpainted face, now after over 800 years, though more for the pleasure of the art lover than for the benefit of unknown hierarchs and countless pilgrims on their path from the formal beauty of the phenomena to the formless truth of the dharma. A monumental crowned Buddha Amitayus with traces of an old cold gilding (face) in a private collection may represent another idiom of the Indian Pala style in Tibet (height: 60 cm) in the 12th century or at around 1200. Whether this masterpiece of "Indo-Tibetan" art, which recalls the Tibetan tathāgata paintings of that period in composition and decorative details, was produced by an Indian image-maker in Tibet as one is inclined to believe, or cast in a Tibetan workshop in a rather pure Indian style is difficult to say **(fig. 122).**

While other Nepalese sculpture is represented only by a small but beautiful 14th century gilt copper statuette of a thousand-armed Avalokiteshvara (no.33), the significant image of the seated bodhisattva (Amoghasiddhi?) no.20 should be rather attributed to a Newari atelier of the 11th century than described as "Tibetan". Like several other statues of the same style, this loan from the Lhasa museum can be regarded as a prototype model for Tibetan statuary of the phyi dar period, especially

[15] See N.R. Ray, Eastern Indian Bronzes. Delhi 1986, plate 282 and 312.

also for monumental clay statues like at the Lhasa Jo khang or at sNye thang monastery.[16] In its simple composition and jewelry adornment it recalls the classical tradition of early Newari sculpture at a time when Tibetan artists were just about to copy and to assimilate the formal vocabulary of their neighbours to the south, west and north of the central regions.

Two royal figures, no. 80 and 81, are masterpieces of Tibetan statuary in a double sense: beautiful examples of advanced 14th century image art and rare incunabula of high-ranking secular iconography. The 47cm high brass image of King Songtsen Gampo (Srong btsan sGam po, no. 81, **fig. 12,** compare with a much later statue fig 107) from the Potala Palace is, with the exception of some early 9th century rock-carvings in eastern Tibet, the earliest preserved statue of a sPu rgyal dynasty king, represented here in the much older concept of the "Avalokiteshvara in the form of a king" (Blue Annals). The catalogue text (by Petra Maurer) however, though extensively informing the reader about Srong btsan sGam po in general, does not say anything about the proper statue with regard to its historical, iconographic and stylistic aspects in context.

While this king was identified with Tibet's most prominent bodhisattva already during the later monarchic period, when those kings were described as "son of the gods" (lha sras) or as a "king divinely manifested" in contemporary rdo ring inscriptions and Dunhuang texts, the individual image of the bodhisattva ruler with the small Amitabha figure on top of his turban did not exist to the best of my knowledge before the 14th century. When Ta'i si tu Byang chub rGyal mtshan (1302-1364), the actual ruler of dBus gTsang towards the middle of the 14th century, promoted a "national renaissance" by creating a new awareness

[16] Compare for other metal statues of this type and style D.Welden/J.Casey Singer, The Sculptural Heritage of Tibet. Buddhist Art in the Nyingjei Lam Collection. London 1999, pl.11; von Schroeder 2001, op.cit., pls.167, 217-220; Qing Gong Zangchuan Fojiao Zaoxiang (Tibetan Buddhist Sculptures in the Palace Museum), Beijing 2003, pl.83.

of the Tibetan roots in the dynastic era, the historical and ideological background and motivation for such images and for a proper Srong btsan sGam po cult were established. And at the same period, between 1328 and 1346, the first monumental clay statue of this king was installed in the Jo khang **(fig. 13),** which may have served as a model for the metal image of the exhibition.[17]

The historical circumstances are confirmed by stylistic criteria. The characteristic dragon medallions of the king's robe can be well compared with similar designs of imperial symbolism on Yuan dynasty textiles. – The catalogue texts for the two royal images of the same (!) period and style are strangely written by two different authors. In her detailed discussion of the anonymous "Tibetan dharma king" no.80 Bernadette Broeskamp (BB) follows largely the description in von Schroeder's "Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet" ("Princely donor depicted as Amitayus? 11th/12th century", **fig. 14**)[18], yet interprets the iconography more convincingly as an early religious king (chos rgyal) in the sambhogakāya aspect.

Although this idealized statue of a worldly sovereign may well be associated with earlier concepts of Vairocana as an universal ruler and of the dharmarāja-cakravartin, it must be dated to the same 14th century period like the king no.81. Both images have similar motifs and stylistic elements: garment style and especially the making of the lower part of

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[17] See on this subject also here pp. 140-142, and for a detailed discussion M.Henss, King Srong btsan sGam po Revisited: The royal statues in the Potala Palace and in the Jokhang at Lhasa. Problems of historical and stylistic evidence. Essays on the International Conference on Tibetan Archaeology and Art, Beijing 2002, Chengdu 2004 (p.128-171), p.132ff. According to a Gung thang dKar chag from 1782 statues of Songtsen Gampo and his two wifes were made under the Lhasa ruler sMon lam rDo rje (r. ca.1304-36) and/or his successor Kun dga rDo rje (r. 1323-51) after 1328 and before 1351 (see also Sorensen/Hazod 2007, p.199), which would correspond to the extensive reconstruction works of the Lhasa Tsuglagkhang in the 1340s. Probably the royal clay statues, which existed in the Jokhang until 1966 (fig.13), were identical with those recorded in the ancient texts for the second quarter of the 14th century.

[18] von Schroeder 2001, op.cit., p.940.

the robe, facial features, and hair style. The crown leaves do not resemble those of the 11th or 12th century, which are characterised by a rather flat and linear design (see for example no.20!), but recall instead the more sculptural style of 13th and 14th century metalwork inlaid with precious stones.[19] A comparison with similarly dressed princely figures in the wall-paintings at Drathang (Gra thang, 1081/1093) is for chronological reasons misleading. The style of the royal metal statues in the Potala indicates also an archaistic element in order to mark the historical continuity and the "revival" of the chos rgyal period and its "mode monarchique" in the 14th century. Ornamental textile patterns such as the Central Asian roundels on the sleeves of the king's robe can be regarded as specific designs of ancient royal or princely dresses and were apparently used for a similar context also in later times. And last but not least, no other royal statues of this type exist, which can be safely attributed to the phyi dar period.

One of the most exceptional loans of the entire exhibition, both for its sheer aesthetic beauty and technical workmanship as well as for its art historical importance, is the large gilt copper statue of the Kalacakra yidam deity from Shalu monastery (no.54, height: 60 cm), an unrivalled masterpiece of a Tibetan yab-yum image **(fig. 15).** Nowhere else in Tibet or in any public and private collection in China or abroad has been preserved a similar sculptural group of this size and quality. The catalogue text (Gregor Verhufen) however is limited to a general though detailed iconographic description of the Kalacakra yidam without giving any attention to the individual statue and to its art historical or technical aspects.

This principal image was no doubt specifically associated with Bu ston's Kalacakra teachings and praxis at Shalu and thus would probably have been produced there by an atelier from the Kathmandu Valley some-

[19] Compare also for further ca.14th „princely" statues in the Potala Palace von Schroeder 2001, pl.312 A-C; Henss 2004, op.cit., fig.20.

time between 1320 and 1364.[20] The elegant movement of the figure, the dynamic and very decorative scarves, the elaborately worked crowns, and the various inlaid precious stones indicate clearly the Newar artist tradition of that period, stylistic characteristics which can also be recognized in several painted cycles at Shalu. And it must have been this ultimate yidam image representing the highest teaching system of the Yoga Tantras, which in 1919 the famous pilgrim-scholar Kah thog Si tu Chos kyi rGya mtsho had seen on his extensive travels in the Central Regions of Tibet, "as tall as an arrow, of pure gold and adorned with precious stones".[21] The reviewer being familiar with this monastery since 1980, cannot help adding his personal thanks – certainly in the name of many others who have seen the exhibition – to the monk community of Shalu (and so he did during a visit in October 2006) for having been so generous to let one of their most precious treasures go for some time to the western world.

That significant early paintings are less well represented in the German exhibition depends at least partly on the more limited material which has survived in good condition. And obviously there are now many more pre-16th century thangkas in Western properties (most of them more or less extensively restored) than in Tibetan monasteries and other institutions, which have not been ritually used for long or never did undergo a thorough restoration. Although we do not know if there are still hidden treasures among the painted scrolls stored in the Potala Palace, it seems that there is probably only a single painting of the characteristic 12th and 13th century Five Tathāgata sets left in Tibet as they once existed for example at Shalu monastery[22] and from where their sculptural counterparts were lent for this exhibition (no.19a-e; **fig. 16,** see also **fig. 106**)

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[20] See for other contemporary gilt copper images by Newari artists in Shalu monastery von Schroeder 2001, pls.229 A-C, 230 A-C, 231 A and B.

[21] See Kah thog Si tu 1972, op.cit., p.413.

[22] See S.K.Pathak, The Album of the Tibetan Art Collections. Patna 1986, pls.5,6, 7,11 (photographed by the Indian scholar R. Sāṅkṛityāyana on his travels in southern Tibet between 1929 and 1938). According to my knowledge circa 20 painted scrolls of this

The most significant and beautiful painting shown in the exhibition is a hitherto unpublished 14th century thangka of a Newari artist depicting the crowned Diamond Seat Buddha **(fig. 17)** or, as it is called in the Sādhanamala text of the 12th century, the Vajrāsana tathāgata in bhumisparśa mudrā seated on the diamond throne, triumphing over Māra (no.16). Like in several earlier 12th and 13th century paintings[23] the Buddha is represented soon after his enlightenment seated in the Mahābodhi temple at Bodhgaya, yet depicted "ahistorically" with a crown like a cakravartin, a "world king" or universal ruler, though "still" dressed in a monk's robe of the historical Buddha: Shakyamuni in his divine and kingly form.

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tathāgata type dating to the 12th and 13th century have survived in public and private collections, not including the later versions of the 14th century. – The Shalu group no. 19a-e represents a canonical image type of the five tathāgatas, which was quite popular in the Central Regions of Tibet during the 13th and 14th century. The wrong attribution of these crowned Buddha statues in many publications to "Western Tibet" goes back to a purely speculative hypothesis inUlrich von Schroeder's "Indo-Tibetan Bronzes", Hongkong 1981, p.35-40, which I had questioned already some twenty years ago (unpublished paper). See also Henss 2002, p.35f., and Henss 2003, p.57f.

[23] See C. Bautze Picron, Śakyamuni in Eastern India and Tibet from the 11th to the 13th centuries, in: Silk Road Art and Archaeology, vol.4, Kamakura 1995/96, fig.2, 3, 18; P. Pal, Art of the Himalayas. New York 1991, no.81; S.Kossak/J. Casey Singer, Sacred Visions. Early Paintings from Central Tibet. New York 1998, no.27; P.Pal (Ed.), Himalayas 2003, op.cit, no.121; Xizang Yishu (vol.Painting), Shanghai 1991, p.143; Xizang Yishu Jicui (A Selection of Tibetan Art, Taipei 1995, fig.316, all depicting Shakyamuni without crown, and usually flanked by the white Avalokiteshvara and the gold- or yellow coloured bodhisattva Maitreya (or in a few cases by the two disciples of the Buddha), an iconographic standard already at the Bodhgaya Mahābodhi temple in the 7th century (see Xuanzang's report, S.Beal, ed..)l: Si-Yu-Ki. Buddhist Records of the Western World, London 1884, reprint Delhi 1981, II, p.119), symbolizing compassion (karuna) and friendliness (maitri), are also mentioned in relation with the Māra episode in the Lalitāvistara Buddha biography. – See for another 15th century Nepalese painting of this iconographic type P. Pal, Arts of Nepal, vol.II, Leiden 1978, pl.204, and J. Casey Singer, Bodhgaya and Tibet, in: Bodhgaya . The Site for Enlightenment, ed. by J. Leoshko, Bombay 1988, pl.14. – For the "Vajrāsana tathāgata" as described in several sādhanas see M.Th.de Mallmann, Introduction à l'iconographie du Tantrisme Bouddhique, Paris 1975, p.418.

The crowned Buddha, basically referring to his sambhogakāya aspect according to the trikāya concept and a quite rare iconographic form of the Mahābodhi-Vajrāsana Shakyamuni, symbolizes "the five transcendental insights (jñānas) that the Buddha attained as part of the enlightenment process"[24], manifested by the five transcendental Buddhas seated in the Mahabodhi shrine in the painting's upper section. The actual origins and models of the crowned Diamond Seat-bhumisparśa mudrā Buddha surrounded by Māra's attack and many more scenes of Shakyamuni's life-story can be traced back to the characteristic large Indian stone steles of the Pala period and especially to the popular small votive tablets (see no.15) as they were existing mainly in the Bodhgaya and Nalanda areas to be brought by pious pilgrims and eminent masters to Tibet.

The Chinese monk-traveller Xuanzang (Hsien Tsiang) reports from the early 7th century that the principal statue of the Buddha, "eleven feet and five inches high" in the Mahābodhi temple depicted calling the earth as witness whilst subduing Māra. He described it as adorned with "a necklace of precious stones and jewels, whilst on the head they placed a diadem of encircling gems, exceedingly rich".[25] According to a textual tradition a coronation was part of celestial consecrations bestowed on Shakyamuni after his final meditation stage.[26] And as told by a later Tsongkhapa biography the Jo bo Shakyamuni statue in the Lhasa Jokhang would have been crowned with a diadem (dbu rgyan) "to en-

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[24] J. Huntington, Leaves from the Bodhi Tree. The Art of Pala India (8th-12th century) and its International Legacy. Seattle 1990, p.105f.

[25] S. Beal, (Si-Yu-Ki) 1884, op.cit., vol.II, p.121.

[26] J. Leoshko, The Vajrāsana Buddha, in: Bodhgaya – the site of enlightenment, ed. by Janice Leoshko, Bombay 1988, p.41. Leoshko suggests that the concept of the crowned Buddha is probably emphasizing the connections rather than the distinctions between the historical Buddha Shakyamuni and the notion of Buddhahood as embodied by the "ahistorical" transcendental Buddhas.

courage the devotion of the Indians"[27], which recalls the 10th and 11th century stone steles from Nalanda depicting the Buddha crowned like a king as an universal sovereign.

Beyond the very thorough description and interpretation of the Buddha story around the central composition, nothing is said in the catalogue text on the art historical and stylistic aspects of the painting, which recalls the Newari style murals at Shalu of the first half of the 14th century, though it is not really identical with their specific formal language. While the individual "handwriting" indicates clearly a Nepalese artist (see detail illustr. p.175,176), one cannot label this magnificent Mahābodhi enlightenment Shakyamuni simply as "Kathmandu Valley style". 30 years after Pratapaditya Pal's pioneering book on Nepalese painting and so many newly discovered and published painted scrolls and metal images from Nepal and Nepalese style works of art from Tibet one sees the need for a comprehensive modern documentation of Nepalese painting and sculpture and of its "Nepalo-Tibetan" derivatives. And then one may also find a more precise stylistic – and iconographical - identity for the much later but somehow archaistic and hardly less refined painting of the Bodhgaya-Shakyamuni no.17 than just "Tibet, 18th-19th century".[28]

Another excellent selection – especially in the context of the two paintings no.16 and 17 – has been the sandalwood "model" of the Mahābodhi temple at Bodhgaya **(fig. 18),** the largest and most detailed existing miniature copy of this principal Buddhist sanctuary among several other replicas in the Potala Palace collection (no.22, height: 49 cm), with a very informative catalogue text on the history and

[27] R. Kaschewsky, Das Leben des lamaistischen Heiligen Tsongkhapa Blo Bzang Grags pa (1357-1419), dargestellt und erläutert anhand seiner Vita "Quellort allen Glückes", Wiesbaden 1971, p.165.

[28] In how far the scenes around the central Mahābodhi Buddha composition may refer to the tradition of the Buddha's legendary Kalacakra teachings in the Dhānyakaṭaka Stupa (see p.179 and 594, n.101) would deserve a proper iconographic analysis of this interesting thangka.

typology of the Mahābodhi temple by Niels Gutschow. While several other of these temple copies are much smaller in order to serve as portable votive objects for pilgrims, this exceptional shrine in miniature might have been sent with a highranking mission to Tibet, probably during the phyi dar period or at the latest maybe as a sacred gift taken by the Bodhgaya abbot Śāriputra on his visit to Tibet in 1414. Beyond its value as an object of veneration, this outstanding reliquary is most important for architectural exactness as an authentic 11th century "model" of the original building as it was before the late 11th century (indicated by some details which no longer exist in the present building).

The attribution of this Mahābodhi temple replica to Burmese artisans[29], who had been involved in the reconstruction of the temple architecture around 1098, remains however speculative. This assumption is based on another problematic hypothesis, according to which the so-called "short necked Buddha" type (as illustrated by this replica) would indicate a distinctive Burmese origin, but not, one may add, exclusively, since the early prototypes appear to have their roots in Eastern Bengal. The wooden temple replica, which seems to be made almost exactly on a scale of 1:100 in relation to the early circa 50 metres high Mahābodhi temple of the Gupta period, informs us like no other of these models about the original construction of this foremost shrine of the Buddhist world. Only here we can identify the original stone fence dating to the first century B.C.E. or the contemporary capitals and bases of the pillars. And even the many small Gupta style Buddha statues in the niches

[29] Based on von Schroeder 2001, op.cit., vol.I, p.328-337, according to whom this wooden replica must have been made in order to "serve as a model for the construction of a Mahābodhi-type temple at another location", a hypothesis, which however would not correspond so well to the fact, that the object was once brought – as a sacred reliquary – to Tibet, though it cannot be ruled out that it was given to the new land of the Buddhist faith only sometime after circa 1200, when there was no more much need and use for keeping such architectural models for new constructions in the heartland of the Buddha and beyond.

of the central tower and of the portico may serve for a reliable reconstruction of the former architecture in composition and style.

At about the same time when the sandalwood Mahābodhi temple no.22 had been carved, one of the most beautifully illuminated Indian palm leaf manuscripts was written not far away from Bodhgaya, very likely at the Nalanda Buddhist academy in the late 11th century, from where it was apparently brought to 'On ke ru Lha khang monastery, located some kilometres away from the northern banks of the Tsangpo river opposite Tsethang (no. 26). This hitherto unknown manuscript of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sutra (whose name and content should have been explained briefly in the catalogue) is one of the few illustrated books of the Pala period in complete condition and especially unique because of its superbly painted and well preserved wooden covers (58x7 cm, 139 leaves with total twelve illuminations on four pages, **figs. 19, 20**). According to the colophon the Tsethang manuscript was donated by the mother of the great pandita Sri Asoka in the second year of the reign of King Sūrapāla, which corresponds to the very end of the 11th century.

With no doubt were those Indian manuscript illuminations **(fig. 21)** of great influence for early Tibetan paintings in the 11th and 12th century. In addition to Eva Allinger's thorough discussion of this painted treasure in iconography and style, which like many other texts in the catalogue may certainly suit more the special interest of the scholarly reader than it would meet the curiosity and capacity of the "other 95%" of the exhibition's visitors, at least two approximately contemporary Pala manuscripts in Tibet are adorned with illuminations and painted or carved covers of similar breathtaking quality: another 8000 verses Prajñāpāramitā text in the Tibet Museum at Lhasa and a manuscript of unknown content at Sakya monastery.[30]

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[30] Precious Deposits, Historical Relics of Tibet, China. Beijing 2000, vol.I, p.108-112; Sha jia si (Sakya Monastery), Beijing 1985, fig.105. The illuminated Pala manuscript was shown to me in 1994.

The enormous book treasures at Sakya were so far never investigated, especially the corpus of Sanskrit manuscripts, "one of the last 'hidden' treasures of Asia".[31] When in 1926 the Indian scholar Rahula Sāṅkṛtyā-nana (1893-1963) "discovered 25 bundles of palm-leaf Sanskrit manuscripts" in the "Manuscript chapel" (Phyag dpe lha Khang) on the upper storey of Sakya monastery, "the whole floor was covered with a thick layer of dust about one-third of an inch".[32] While in 1961 about 250 manuscripts were brought from Tibet to the Minority Palace library in Beijing and in the successive years many more from various monasteries were gathered in Lhasa (Potala and Norbulingka Palaces, of which some are now in the Tibet Museum, **figs. 22-27**), Sakya is still by far the largest monastic repository of Tibetan and Indian manuscripts. At present the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences in Lhasa is working on a project for an inventory of the Tibetan written and xylographed books in Sakya. And only recently all these early manuscripts were moved from the huge 13th century book-shelves in the Lha khang Chen mo to a separate library hall built in the traditional Tibetan Sakya style in 2004 opposite the southern front of the main monastic complex.

From "Prajñāpāramitā light" to the most heavy 8000 verses edition: no.27 is a 100 cm long and 54,5 cm (!) wide foliant with huge carved wooden covers and usually "on display" at it's original place in the main assembly hall of Gyantse monastery (Chos rgyal lha khang). Both manuscripts are documenting in the exhibition the wide range of the eminent Buddhist textual tradition from the Indian Sanskrit sources to the great Tibetan Sutra translations in the Kanjur at the time of Tsongkhapa, for

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[31] E. Steinkellner, A Tale of Leaves. On Sanskrit Manuscripts in Tibet, their Past and their Future. Eleventh Gonda Lectures 2003, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Amsterdam 2004, p.30.

[32] R. Sāṅkṛtyāyana, Second Search of Sanskrit Palm-Leaf Manuscripts in Tibet. Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society, vol.XXIII, 1937 (p.1-57), p.4-6. For several illuminated Indian Pala manuscripts photographed in the 1930s in Tibetan monasteries such as Ngor, Narthang and Sakya see S.K. Pathak 1986, op.cit., plates 19-29.

the exhibition catalogue a good opportunity to inform extensively about the "Perfection of Wisdom".

Closely connected with the Indian painting tradition of the Pala period is another hitherto unseen scroll painting of a standing bodhisattva Manjuśri from the Yarlung Museum at Tsethang and published here for the first time (no.31; 77,5x23,5cm; **fig. 28**). Formerly kept at Ke ru Lha khang in the opposite 'On Valley this image is no doubt one of the earliest Tibetan paintings to exist, datable on stylistic grounds to the late 11th century.[33] The long dbU med inscription on the back consists of Sanskrit dhāraṇis and consecration formulas. The iconographic and stylistic identity of this vertically proportioned banner – apparently a very early type of the Tibetan thangka – has been well researched in the catalogue by Bernadette Bröskamp.

Quotations from Indian manuscript illuminations of the 11th century such as the trees on top, the lotuses at the bottom, the figural style of the bodhisattva, and the kneeling donors recalling similarly drawn lay worshippers in Tibetan murals of the 11th century, characterise this painting as an early Tibetan interpretation of the Indian Pala style. The Tsethang bodhisattva can be also clearly distinguished from the much earlier Tibetan style found at Dunhuang (London, British Museum) and from the sPu rgyal period bodhisattva statues at Ke ru Lha khang. The safe stylistic profile of an 11th century date for this thangka corresponds to other circa contemporary Pala style paintings outside India like, for example, in Pagan (Abeyadana, Kubyauk gyi Myinkaba, late 11th and early 12th century) and also contributes to confirm the dating of other

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[33] See for a drawing after this painting M.Henss, review article of "Sacred Visions". Early Tibetan Painting" (New York 1998), Oriental Art, 4/1998-1999, fig.1, and fig.2 for a sPu rgyal period painting depicting a standing monk.

early painted scrolls such as the large Amitayus thangka in the Metropolitan Museum New York.[34]

Compared with the Indian roots and antecedents, the Chinese connection with Tibetan Buddhist art for wellknown historical and geographical reasons is much more long-lasting and by far more variously interrelated in both directions. While the term "Sino-Tibetan art" refers correctly to all those paintings and statues produced in Tibet but influenced by specific Chinese elements in style and iconography (though often misused for Buddhist or "lamaist" art produced in China in the Tibetan style), "Tibeto-Chinese" should be the right label for all Tibetan style works of art made in China and its bordering areas.

All together 10 exhibits belong to this second and indeed more attractive group. All of them were produced in the imperial ateliers, which guaranteed a highly refined quality standard of Tibetan-Buddhist "court art" in China. This foreign esoteric Buddhism, its religious fascination and political function, and its exotic visual world was in fact concentrated and limited to imperial demand and patronage, be it the passionate personal attachment to the Tibetan hierarchs and to their sacred meditational images under the Yongle emperor of the early Ming, be it the much discussed support of Tibetan Buddhism by the Qianlong emperor between political considerations and private interest.

The early chapter of Tibeto-Chinese art during the Mongol-Chinese and Yuan dynasty period (1279-1368 and before) can't be represented better than by the magnificent and extremely well preserved Acala "silk painting" from the Tibet Museum in Lhasa **(fig. 29)** woven in the costly "imperial" slip tapestry technique (kesi) (no. 49). The much discussed question, where these early fabric thangkas in this especially valued technique were produced, Lhasa or Dadu (Beijing), is usually answered in

[34] See Kossak/Casey Singer 1998, op.cit., no.1. Comparable in both 11th century paintings are the proportions of the head, facial features, nimbus, design of the lotus base, and donor figures.

favour of the Xi Xia Tangut Kingdom, "made in Yuan China".[35] Yet there is no doubt that the painted models for these highly precious images came from Tibet.[36] In so far as the tapestry is certainly not the original icon, which according to the Tibetan inscription on the Acala was dedicated "to the great 'Khon (Sa skya) master Grags pa rGyal mtshan (1147-1216) by his disciple Cang brtson 'grus grags from Kham".

Since the first part of the inscription has been variously interpreted as "commissioned" for Grags pa rGyal mtshan or as "offered" and "presented" to him, the kesi was dated by some scholars before 1216. According to Per K.Sorensen's highly interesting, though not always feasible and consistent historiographical argumentation, the Acala would have been "executed for and donated to" Grags pa rGyal mtshan by Cang brtson 'grus grags sometime between 1200 and 1216.[37] According to the most likely interpretation of the inscription the original painting was "presented" (phul) personally to the eminent Sakya hierarch, that means during his lifetime, while its woven reproduction was commissioned at a later time "on imperial command" at the Mongol capital.

[35] Like some other scholars (see for example Bartholomew 2003, p.66f.), or Per K. Sorensen, (Rulers on the Celestial Plain. Ecclesiastic and Secular Hegemony in Medieval Tibet. A Study of Tshal Gung- thang. 2 vols. Wien 2007, vol.II, p.353ff.), focusing strongly on the pre- and early Mongol Sakya-Tangut relations in the 12th and 13th centuries and especially on the "Xi Xia Tshal Gung thang connection" during the first half of the 13th century, associates this "patronized tapestry tradition" like the Lama Zhang kesi in the Lhasa museum and some other related fabric images quite definitively and in great detail with the Xi Xia Tangut Kingdom (Tib. Mi nyag), where it would have been manufactured and then "presented to Grags pa rGyal mtshan" between circa 1200 and 1216.

[36] See for example a 13th century Acala painting in Kossak/Casey Singer 1998, op.cit., no.22 ("ca.1200), which also would support a later 13th century date for the Acala kesi, whose overall style may hardly predate the painted models.

[37] Sorensen 2007, op.cit.: "it is more than likely that the Acala was presented to Grags pa rgyal mtshan as a token of respect in connection with or on the occasion of some consecration ceremonies of Cang ston".

A later and in my opinion[38] more convincing date of the kesi to the Yuan dynasty period is also suggested by Bernadette Bröskamp's very informative catalogue text because of some linguistic inconsistencies in the Tibetan inscription caused by the non-Tibetan textile atelier later on and, less strikingly I would say, due to the "sumptuous colourfulness" of the kesi. Another argument for a later dating to the Yuan period would be the extensive and detailed floral ornament surrounding the central composition, apparently an "advanced" and more sophisticated interpretation of an earlier design, which hardly does occur in Tibetan painting of around 1200 already. Or the former pearls stitched once on the figures in the lower register, of which only a single one is now left (almost invisible) on the forehead of the central Tara.[39]

The use of pearls to adorn textiles and fabric images is known as a characteristic Mongolian tradition. Even more supporting an "advanced Mongol period" date is, in my opinion, the elaborate silken border (fortunately reproduced in the catalogue in full size), which after a closer look in the exhibition must be the authentic mounting of the period. The ornamental vocabulary of these golden silks recalls Yuan dynasty patterns **(fig. 30)**.[40] And similarly would the two decorative lan dza (lan tsha) script panels with the Om mani padme hum mantra indicate a Yuan period origin[41]. Although this sacred script originated at the turn

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[38] M.Henss, The Cultural Monuments of Tibet. The Central Regions, forthcoming, vol.I, ch.I.9.

[39] For this information I have to thank Bernadette Bröskamp.

[40] Compare for example a similar design of a later Yuan fabric thangka in the Lhasa museum, Precious Deposits 2000, op.cit., vol.III, no.22.

[41] Similar red and blue silk panels "brocaded in flat gilded paper" have been dated to the 13th century (see: J.Simcox, Chinese Textiles, London 1994 Spink and Son Ltd., no.14) or were used also for top and bottom mounts on a 13th century Song kesi of a Buddhist image in the Potala Palace (see: Great Treasury of Chinese Fine Arts, vol.6, Shanghai 1987, pl.193). Another lan dza script panel of this type and technique was carbon-14 "dated" to 1439-1629 (see: Orientations, February 2000, p.35). Yet how problematic and misleading these tests can (!) be, is shown in a professional catalogue of a textile exhibition, where several Tibeto-Chinese silk brocades and kesi weaves were dated a hundred years earlier (or even "with 95% confidence A.D.980-1290", ad-

of the first millennium in Buddhist Bengal, where it was called in allusion to its calligraphic character "rañjanā" or "rañja" (Sanskrit: "delightful, pleasant"), and came with Buddhist manuscripts successively to Nepal, Central Asia and China, the decorational use for prominent Tibetan style works of art like the Acala tapestry does not appear to have been popular before the Yuan dynasty period. "Rañja" was phonetically imitated by the Tibetans as "lan dza" and predominantly used for ornamental mantras and bījas (root syllables).

Whatever the artistic differences in Tibetan "silk painting" of around 1200 or 1300 may be, the figural style of our kesi – for example the Avalokiteshvara and Uṣṇīṣavijayā at the bottom – goes rather towards the 14th century than back to the 12th century. And a good number of Tibetan painted scrolls, which by stylistic estimation (or speculation) may date "around 1200" were in fact produced some fifty to hundred years later. The figural style of the Acala kesi recalls such as of the Gungthang Lama Zhang tapestry in the same Lhasa museum several monk paintings from "upper Talung" (sTag lung ya thang) in Central Tibet and from its Eastern Tibetan "lower Talung" (sTag lung ma thang) branch monastery Riwoche Tsuglagkhang (founded in 1276), of which many must be dated to the last quarter of the 13th century.[42] Was this fabric image – woven after a hundred years earlier painted model ("Vorlage") – once sent by the Yuan court at around 1300 or shortly after to Sakya or to Tshal Gungthang as it has been recently argued with good reason for the kesi portrait of the Gungthang founder Lama

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vertisment Spink and Son Ltd, Orientations, August 1989) than they were in fact produced by iconographic and stylistic evidence (see: Heaven's Embroidered Cloths. One Thousand Years of Chinese Textiles, Hongkong 1995, no.21-22 h).

[42] On the sTag lung thangkas see Casey Singer 1997 and Kossak 2202 b. A large group of ca. 80 lama portrait paintings is said to have come from sTag lung monastery within the last twenty years to the West, of which an essential part may have been produced at Riwoche monastery inChamdo district, northwestern Kham around or after 1276.

Zhang (alias dPal ldan g.Yu brag pa, 1123-93) [43], which can be attributed to the same period and textile atelier? And, if Tshul Gungthang, would it have adorned here the contemporary private memorial shrine for Khubilai Khan, next to a personal image of the latter said to have been installed here?

And while a manufacture of these woven thangkas in the late 13th or early 14th century is very likely, there would be much more reason (also by history and textual sources!) instead of suggesting the eventual whereabouts in the "Western Xia" Tangut Kingdom, to locate the textile ateliers at the Yuan capital of Dadu under the supervision of the genius Nepalese artist A ni ko (Chin. Anige, 1245-1306), who is well-known for having produced these highly precious and esteemed fabric images.[44]

Very probably the Acala with its illustrated and textual references to the first three Sakya hierarchs was manufactured decades later than the painted Vorlage (model) and sent with Tibetan dignitaries at the Yuan court to Sakya monastery in the late 13th or early 14th century. When between circa 1310 and 1320 the imperial tutor and preceptor Mus chen rGyal mtshan dPal bzang po, the nephew of 'Phags pa bLa ma, travelled from Dadu (Beijing) to Sakya, he carried "woven images (btags sku)" in his luggage.[45] –

[43] 41 Cf. Sorensen/Hazod 2007, p.43,188,354ff.,362. Although Sorensen offers some inconsistent and contradictory theories about the date and place of manufacture for the Lama Zhang and for the Acala Kesi one of his suggestions seems to meet my own opinion: "We may now conclude that both masterpieces in the final analysis most probably represent exquisit – early 14th century? – Yüan period products executed in a Chinese atelier, but based upon or selected from prior, evidently 13th century paintings" (p.376). – A late dating of the Lama Zhang kesi to the Yuan period has been also suggested by Kossak 1999/2000 ("early 14th century").

[44] For A ni ko (Chin. Anige) see Anning Jing 1994; Henss 2007 b and forthcoming, with a kesi fabric image of the Green Tara in the Asian Art Museum attributed to the A ni ko workshops.

[45] Sorensen 2007, op.cit.

The kesi technique was introduced into China by the Uighurs in the early Song dynasty (12th century) and, as we are informed by a historical text, factories for these textiles were established in Hangzhou with "weavers of gold fabrics from the western regions" and "new trends developed".[46] Hangzhou is well known for its production of silkenware and also as an important administration and art center in southern China, particularly of Tibetan Buddhism during the late Song and early Yuan dynasty. A comprehensive Tripitaka edition was published here in 1269-1285, many Buddhist texts with "Tibeto-Chinese" illustrations xylographed, and the famous Tibetan style statues at the Feilaifeng grottoes carved between 1282 and 1292. It has been argued by the Chinese scholar Su Bai that the Acala kesi was possibly(!) produced in a Hangzhou atelier.[47] Although it cannot be ruled out that such silken images were manufactured in Hangzhou towards the late 13th century, we have so far no textual or other evidence.

After the first Ming emperor Hongwu (r.1368-1398) had banned the production and use of those luxurious silken images, a grand revival of this Tibeto-Chinese art tradition was patronized by both the third Ming ruler Chengzu, known as the Yongle emperor (r.1403-1424) and especially during the reign of the Xuande emperor (1426-1435). The large blue and golden silk brocade banner of Cakrasamvara in yab-yum from the Yarlung Museum in Tsethang (no.53; 275x210cm without border), probably once kept in a Tsethang monastery, has been so far – quite literally – a hidden treasure, which was not on display in Tibet for the last decades.[48] Sometime after circa 1985 its original fabric border

[46] After: Tapestry in the Collection of the National Palace Museum (Taipei), Kyoto 1970, p.16, with a good survey on the kesi technique and it's history (p.11-17).

[47] Su Bai, Yuandai Hangzhou de Zangchuan Fojiao Siyuan Kaogu (On Tibetan Buddhism in Hangzhou in the Yuan dynasty and some related cultural relics), in: Su Bai, Zangchuan Fojiao Siyuan Kaogu (Archaeological Studies on Monasteries of Tibetan Buddhism, Beijing 1996 (p.365-387), p.376f.

[48] A reproduction of the Tsethang Yongle Cakrasamvara was already published in the picture album A Survey of Tibet, Lhasa, 1987, and in M.Henss, The Woven Image: Ti-

was removed and replaced by modern brocades. By the Chinese six-character mark Da Ming Yongle nian shi in the upper right corner, "made during the Yongle reign of the Great Ming", it can be dated to the years after 1407, when Ming Chengzu met the Fifth Karmapa at the court in Nanjing and the representatives of the Sakyapa and Gelugpa schools in the successive years. Compared with two other large-size embroidered silk thangkas of Cakrasamvara and Vajrabhairava in the Lhasa Jokhang bearing the same Yongle reign mark[49] the Tsethang banner depicts no other deities or monk figures, which would allow an attribution to one of these Tibetan-Buddhist traditions or to a specific hierarch.

The monochrome gold technique has been associated in the catalogue text (by Juliane Noth) with the originally Central Asian Nasij ("gold cloth") weaving of the Yuan period. Basically similar gold-and-blue silk lampas weaves with Buddhist design did exist already in the 13th century.[50] Possibly these uni-coloured "silken paintings" on blue or red ground had also some influence on later Tibetan thangkas painted in an equivalent monochrome technique. I cannot see, however, any distinctive drawing style in the "Chinese brush painting manner" (catalogue text). "Chinese" is here the entity of several formal and technical features and the individual "handwriting": the transformation of a Tibetan iconographic and aesthetic vocabulary into a new Tibeto-Chinese syntax of slightly different figural proportions, facial features, and ornamental design (lotus petals), which appear to have been meticulously copied but were seen through the eyes of a Chinese artist. At least two more Yongle-marked gold-threaded silk thangkas of the same style and from the same atelier exist in Lhasa: a Vajrabhairava on blue ground in the Potala

beto-Chinese Textile Thangkas of the Yuan and Early Ming Dynasties, Orientations, November 1997, fig.11.

[49] Henss 1997, op.cit., fig.9, 10. When these two banners were shown upon my personal request in 1994 I was sadly unable to make detailed photographs and thus could not identify the lamas and their specific lineage in the upper register.

[50] See A.Heller, Tibetan Art. Milano 1999, p.88, plates 75, 76.

Palace **(fig. 31)** and another one depicting the same yidam protector on red ground in the Jo bo chapel of the Jokhang. [51]

Although the Guhyasamāja-Aksobhyavajra silk embroidery from the Potala Palace (no.55) was previously published in colour[52], it is just breathtaking to see the original image and its fascinating bright colourfulness and brilliant stitching freshly preserved with its original fabric border as if it were made yesterday! **(fig. 32)**

The thorough written catalogue text (by Bernadette Bröskamp) presents an interesting and convincing iconographic analysis, especially with regard to the two monks in the upper section. While the lama to the left can be quite safely identified by his black hat with the double vajra and by the small Manjushri figure (alluding to the first Ming emperor, who was declared a reincarnation of the wisdom bodhisattva by his successor) as the Fifth Karmapa bDe bzhin gShegs pa (1384-1415), the other "black hat lama" to the right might be more difficult to determine. Since another Karmapa can be ruled out for sheer chronological reasons, it can be only – as rightly suggested in the catalogue – the Tsongkhapa disciple Shakya Yeshe (Shakya Ye shes, 1352-1435), to whom the Yongle emperor had also bestowed a black hat and the title "Son of the Buddha of Western Heaven" and "Great National Preceptor" (daguoshi) at their meeting in 1415.

Shakya Yeshe is represented on various other fabric images in succession of his great master as the supreme teacher and great Gelugpa head displaying the dharmacakra mudrā. The figure in bhumisparśa and dhyāna mudrā on the embroidery – with the blue six-armed Mahākāla protector of the Yellow School! – would be interpreted as the Gelugpa hierarch second to Tsongkhapa at a time when the latter was still alive. If so, how can the representatives of these different religious traditions

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[51] For the blue Vajrabhairava brocade image see: The Potala. Holy Palace in the Snow Land, Beijing 1996, p.151. The Jokhang banner is unpublished.

[52] Bod kyi thang ka (Tibetan Thangkas), Beijing 1985, pl.5; Henss 1997, op.cit., fig.12.

be depicted on one and the same thangka, which usually was dedicated and offered to the head or to the principal monastery of a specific school? This unorthodox iconography can be only explained by an "unusual" yet nevertheless very probable function (in view of our usual understanding of these very images!) of this embroidery, as an apparently personal use of the emperor for his own religious needs at the court.

As already mentioned, this silken masterpiece must have been commissioned for iconographic reasons during the reign of the Yongle emperor, whose imperial production of elaborate fabric images and refined gilt copper statues was not primarily associated – at least in the earlier years - with one of the three major Tibetan Buddhist schools like later on with the Gelugpa under the Xuande emperor. Thus in correspondence to Ming Chengzu's political and diplomatic activities, an iconographic syncretism and "ecumenical" approach equally towards the Karmapa Kagyüpa, Sakyapa, and Gelugpa would characterise the brocaded and embroidered silken thangkas produced during his reign. By iconographic and historical evidence the Potala-Guhyasamaja must be dated after Shakya Yeshe's first visit at the Ming court in 1415/1416 and before the death of Tsongkhapa in 1419.

The style and the distinctive gold-thread technique can be best compared with the two large Yongle-marked embroidered banners in the Lhasa Jokhang (**figs. 33, 34**, see above for no.53) and with a third thangka of Raktayamāri belonging to the same set, which is now in a private collection **(fig. 35**).[53] Figural proportions and drapery style, the chiaroscuro shading of the body and the ornamental gold-thread "drawing" of the throne-back and nimbus, particularly of the smaller seated figures, are so similar that both the "Jokhang set" and the Potala Guhyasamaja must have been produced in the same imperial atelier at about the same period. This would confirm a date of the Potala embroidery to 1416-1419.

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[53] See Christie's New York, 2.6.1994, no.225.

The same ornamental design can be also found among the famous gilt metal statues of the Yongle period. A close affinity exists also between the figural and ornamental style of the embroidery and of the wall-paintings (and statues) at Gyantse monastery and castle (ca. 1390-1430s; figural proportions, garment style, jewellery, torana arch and pillars, lotus throne). And obviously the well-documented regular missions from Gyantse to the Ming court and back in the early 15th century had left some cross-cultural artistic traces in Tibetan painting and statuary in China and in Tibeto-Chinese art in Tibet. Not "Nepalese" art was instrumental for the formation of the new "lamaistic" court style under the Yongle emperor, but the "Nepalo-Tibetan" style of the art at Gyantse of around 1400.

Another extraordinary Tibetan style embroidered thangka depicting Kapāladhara-Hevajra comes from the Potala Palace (no.50). By the rich design around the central figure and the decorative entity of image and ornament, the tantric protector has been transformed into a luxurious tapestry of imperial extravagance. The iconographic relation of the Hevajra yidam to the Sakya tradition does not necessarily associate this perfectly preserved banner with the visit of the 32nd Sakya abbot Kun dga' bKra shis rGyal mtshan at the Ming court in 1413 (in Nanjing and Beijing), but may also refer to Shakya Ye she's meetings with the Ming emperor in 1415 or in 1434/35, now being entitled by the Xuande emperor (r.1425-1435) as "Jamchen Chöje" (Byams chen Chos rje, "the Dharma King of Great Mercy" Chin.: daci fawang). Two other silken images of Hevajra, one in kesi technique in the Potala Palace and one embroidery in a private collection include the portrait of this principal Gelugpa hierarch, the first successor of Tsongkhapa.[54] However the total lack of any other related deities and monks on the Potala-Hevajra may also indicate the emperor's private use of the image or, as in the

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[54] See for the Hevajra kesi: The Potala Palace 1996, op.cit., p.145. For the private collection Hevajra embroidery see A.Heller, A Yung-Lo Embroidery Thangka: Iconographic and Historical Analysis. Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Art Studies. The Third International Conference on Tibetan Archaeology and Arts, Beijing 2006, Abstract.

case of the large Cakrasamvara brocade (no.53), another imperial function at the court.

If the thangka was ever dedicated to the Gelugpa, this "minimal iconography" would possibly indicate a date of around 1415: At his first meeting with the Yongle emperor in early 1415, Shakya Yeshe was treated with fewer honours than the representatives of the Karmapa and Sakyapa, receiving at that time only the title of a daguoshi, "Great National Preceptor", and of a "Son of the Buddha of the Western Heaven".[55] When at the occasion of his second visit at the Ming capital in 1434/35 Jamchen Chöje had obviously managed to bring the Yellow School into the leading position at the imperial court and had received the title of a "Great Compassionate Dharma King" (daci fawang) or Byams chen chos rje as "variation of his title" (E.Sperling), he was showered with presents by the Xuande emperor.

It seems that in fact most of the fabric thangkas can be attributed to the reign period of the Xuande emperor (1425-1435), whose promotion for a revival of the costly Yuan silk tapestries is documented by at least 12 preserved major images in kesi and embroidered brocade technique. And due to the now much higher imperial appreciation of the new Gelugpa hierarch his portrait as the supreme dharma teacher was depicted on most of the textile icons made during the Xuande reign.[56]

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[55] Ming shilu, ed. Beijing 1974, juan 331, p.8577; E.Sperling, Early Ming Policy toward Tibet: An Examination of the Proposition that the Early Ming Emperors adopted a "Divide and Rule" Policy toward Tibet. Phil. Thesis, Indiana University (USA) 1983, p.136ff.

[56] See Henss 1997, figs.7,12,15,16,18; The Potala Palace 1996, op.cit., p.145; E.Lo Bue in: Tesori del Tibet, Milano 1994, no.81. While during his first visit at the imperial court in Nanjing (arrival on February 3, 1415) Shakya Yeshe had received the title of a "State Teacher" or "Great National Preceptor" (da guo shi) by the Yongle emperor, the more honorific title of a "Great Compassionate Dharma King" (daci fawang), of which "Jamchen Chöje" (Byams chen chos rje) is a Tibetan variation (E.Sperling 1983), was only granted on his second visit in Beijing in 1434 by the Xuande emperor. For references see: Ming-shih, juan 331, p.8577, Beijing 1974; G.Tucci, Tibetan Painted Scrolls, Roma 1949, p.253 and note 62; T.W.D.Shakabpa, Tibet. A Political History, New Haven/London 1967, p.84; T.V.Wylie, Lama Tribute in the Ming Dynasty, in:

However, the maximum span to date the Potala Hevajra would be, in my opinion, on historical, iconographic, and stylistic grounds, between 1415, the year of the Yongle emperor's first encounters with the Sakyapa and Gelugpa representatives, and 1435, when Jamchen Chöje made his second visit to the Ming court. Although a more precise dating remains speculative, stylistic criteria appear to be rather in favour of the Xuande period than of a Yongle reign date, as suggested in the catalogue. The ornamental decoration can be compared with those thangkas, which must be attributed to 1434/35 such as, for example, the two other Hevajra images mentioned above.[57]

Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson, ed. by M.Aris/Aung San Suui Kyi, Delhi 1980, p.107; E.Sperling, The 1413 Ming Embassy to Tsong kha pa and the Arrival of Byams chen Chos rje Shakya Ye shes at the Ming Court. Journal of the Tibet Society, vol.2, 1982, p.107; E.Sperling , Early Ming Policy toward Tibet: An Examination of the Proposition that the Early Ming Emperors Adopted a "Divide and Rule" Policy toward Tibet. Phil.Diss. Indiana University, USA, 1983, p.149ff. (in 1415 "Ch'eng tsu did not make Shakya ye shes a fa wang", but only a "guoshi"); Sera Thekchen Ling, Beijing 1995, introduction; and last but not least the inscriptions on the two wellknown kesi and embroidery portraits of this lama in the Tibet Museum, Lhasa, see Henss 1997, op.cit. (see here note 44), figs. 15,18. With regard to Amy Heller's research on a comparable Hevajra embroidery in a private collection I can refer here only on my own photographs of this very thangka and on Heller's presentation of her paper (and on the abstract) at the Third International Conference on Tibetan Art and Archaeology in Beijing, October 2006, but not on the complete text of this paper to be published in the Proceedings of this conference (forthcoming). An attribution of the latter embroidery to the Yongle emperor and thus to the year 1415 or soon after Shakya Yeshe's first visit to the imperial court would be confirmed only by the "lower" title of a daguoshi in the inscription on the back (presently unknown to me), while the title "Jamchen Chöje" (Byams chen Chos rje) was bestowed upon the Sera founder later on and probably not before his second visit to the Ming court in 1434/35, i.e. to the Xuande emperor. See Sperling 1983, op.cit., p.149ff., and Chen kelun 2004, p.18: it was the Xuanzong (Xuande) emperor, who "in June, the 9th year of Xuande Reign (1434), conferred the title Byams chen chos rgyal".

[57] The sumptuous ornamental vocabulary of the Potala Hevajra recalls comparable fabric thangkas of the 1434/1435 period such as Henss 1997, fig.7,16,18, or the private collection Hevajra embroidery, which probably belongs for iconographic and stylistic reasons (Byams chen Chos rje in teaching gesture, formal affinity to the Metropolitan Museum, Vajrabhairava) to the late "Xuande group" of circa 1434/1435.

Tibetan Buddhist statues made in China, 15th century – the "Yongle Bronzes"

Much better known from among the Tibetan style art production under the early Ming are the famous "Yongle bronzes", of which over 300 still exist (all with reign mark, about 10-15% of them of the Xuande reign period), nearly a hundred of them in Lhasa (mostly in the Potala Palace), approximately 70 in the Beijing museums and 40 in other public collections outside China, and at least about 90 in private collections worldwide.[58] Compared with the fabric thangkas produced between circa 1407 and 1435, it is quite evident that the Yongle emperor's Tibetan patronage gave priority to the metal statues, while his successor, the Xuande emperor, apparently prefered the silken images. Thus by far most of the early Ming "bronzes" had been sent with Chinese missions to Tibet or were given to Tibetan dignitaries in the years between circa 1405 and 1425.

Only very few statues were brought to Tibet under the Xuande emperor and Buddhist sculptures are hardly mentioned as gifts for Tibet in the official accounts of that later period. The production at the imperial court testified by the usual six character reign mark was apparently limited to the Yongle and Xuande era. An interesting "Xuande style" Vajradhara in the Beijing Capital Museum bears not anymore this canonical signature. According to its long inscription it was cast in the first

[58] See for a brief modern survey on the Yongle and Xuande gilt copper statues also the Sotheby's catalogue Visions of Enlightenment. The Speelman Collection of Important Early Ming Buddhist Bronzes, Hongkong 7.10.2006, with an introduction by David Weldon and detailed texts for 15 images in English and Chinese. – The figure of about 300 still existing Yongle and Xuande style images (with reign mark) is my own estimate. In 2000 I counted in the Potala Li ma lha khang alone at least 60 statues and another ca. 15 in the Lhasa Jo khang. A few more are preserved in the Norbulingka Palace and in the Tibet Museum (Lhasa), and only very few in some monasteries outside Lhasa. According to curator Huang Chunhe about 50 Yongle and Xuande images (80-90% Yongle) are kept in the Beijing Capital Museum of totally "circa 10.000" Tibetan and Tibeto-Chinese statues, which were all brought from Tibet between 1966 and 1976. At least another 10 marked "Yongle bronzes" are in the Palace Museum and not less than 8 in the National Museum of China, Beijing.

year of the successive Zhengtong emperor (r. 1436-49), thus in 1436, however, not in the court ateliers **(fig. 36)**.[59]

One of the most beautiful Yongle gilt copper images has been selected for this exhibition: the pensive Avalokiteshvara from the Potala Palace collection (no.37). A visual embodiment of this bodhisattva's compassion, of the divine and the human, this elegant statue is an unsurpassable masterpiece of refined and perfect craftsmanship **(figs. 37-40)**. Only two other images of this Potalaka Avalokiteshvara type "in royal ease" posture (mahārājalila) of a lokanātha ("lord of the universe" or "world protector") exist.[60] The "pensive mudra" and attitude cannot be traced back to any text source. However, prototypes of a bodhisattva with the elbow resting on the raised knee, the right hand lifted towards the cheek slightly inclined in a gesture of contemplation, and the other hand lying on the foot do exist in Wei and Tang dynasty sculpture. A seal of an unidentifiable Dalai Lama fixed to the figure's left arm proves that this Avalokitshvara was once most probably the personal meditation object of its worldly manifestation. Much has been written and published on the "Yongle bronzes", but rarely were their Tibetan archetypes or their Tibetan copies[61] properly identified! **(figs. 123, 124)**

That a hundred years earlier Nepalo-Chinese metal images of the Yuan period would have served as models (catalogue text by Juliane Noth) is simply on stylistic grounds unlikely. And even closer Yuan sculptures – in terms of period, location and ornamental systems – like at the Juyong Guan gateway north of Beijing (1342-1345) cannot be regarded as prominent forerunners in style and iconography. Among the few more

[59] Cf. Selected Works of Ancient Buddhist Statues, Capital Museum Beijing 2005, figs.58-59.

[60] Two other images of this pensive Avalokiteshvara are in the National Museum of China, Beijing (cf. Fo Xiang Yishu Jingcui 2006, p.224f.), and in the Tuyet Nguyet Collection, Hongkong (cf, Arts of Asia, September-October 1994, cover illustration). A fourth Yongle period statue of this type exists reportedly in the Shanghai Museum (Bills 1994, p.80; not published so far).

[61] See for example a pure Yongle style Vajrasattva with inlaid precious stones and without a Yongle reign mark in the Lhasa Tsuglagkhang, von Schroeder 2001, 344C.

safely identifiable 14th century Tibetan metal statues (or comparable no longer existing images), which predate the characteristic "Yongle bronzes" and which must have served as their models, is a Green Tara in the Museum der Kulturen at Basel. This statue also shows the specific double-lotus base with the elongated petals, a distinctive feature of the "Yongle bronzes".[62]

I hesitate to accept the idea that the facial features and proportions of this statue "correspond completely to the Nepalese style" and thus would indicate a Newari artist working in the imperial ateliers. Where are the Yuan period or Nepalese models for this specific type of the pensive bodhisattva? We must give the imperial ateliers the credit of having created new iconographic and compositional types following in some cases much earlier Chinese(!) models as they have been preserved, for example, by a 10th or 11th century stone sculpture of a pensive Avalokiteshvara in the Musée Guimet at Paris[63], **(fig. 41)** an iconographic type, which was originally associated with the six-armed Cintāmaṇi cakra bodhisattva sitting on Mount Potalaka. With very few exceptions, all these images were manufactured probably after Tibetan prototypes in an overall "Nepalo-Tibetan" style – as it characterises a major part of the Tibetan metal statuary during the second half of the 14th century - by top Chinese court artists, who had learned to copy foreign models and transform them into a very distinctive and homogeneous Tibeto-Chinese court style of its own. Was it possible that foreign artists

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[62] Compare Essen/Thingo 1989, no.48. For two other 14th century Tibetan images see von Schroeder 2001, vol.II, 255E and 257A.

[63] See Sirén 1925, vol.II, plate 568. For another Chinese Song dynasty "model" see E.D. Saunders. Mudra. A Study of Symbolic Gestures in Japanese Buddhist Sculpture. London/New York 1960, plate XXI and p.130. "Strong Nepalese traits" were already suggested for the pensive Avalokiteshvara in the Tuyet Nguyet Collection by Bills 1994, p.80, who considered even a Newari artist working at the Ming court. However where are the Nepalese prototypes in composition and style for this specific image type? For the earlier iconography of the pensive bodhisattva type see R.Ghose, Icons and Imagery: A Journey of Style, in: In the Footsteps of the Buddha. An Iconic Journey from India to China. Hongkong 1998, p.24-26.

could produce statues in the imperial workshops in their own characteristic "home style" without any correspondence to the rather canonic conventions imposed by the specific formal guidelines of that Tibeto-Chinese art production?

A few statues with the Yongle or Xuande reign mark exist, whose style does not or only partly correspond to the usual Tibeto-Chinese artistic canon promoted under those emperors. Provided of course the inscriptions are authentic, these images would represent next to the mainstream of the very homogeneous court style some additional though quite exceptional artistic "traditions" or rather specific ways of manufacture in the imperial workshops:

1) an "almost" pure Yongle style image with some distinctive Nepalo-Tibetan elements (garment style), produced by a Chinese court artist, probably during the very early "formative" phase of the Yongle reign period (**figs. 42, 43**).[64]

An interesting Nepalo-Tibetan variation of high quality made in China was recently seen in Beijing: a Medicine Buddha dating to the early 15th century, whose lotus base and finely incised robe were of a purely Tibetan style, while th face suggested an image-maker of the Yongle period (**fig. 44**)[65].

2) a very Nepalo-Tibetan style statue (in proportions, garment style, jewelry, inlaid turquoise stones) with some "Yongle elements" (facial features, lotus petal design, shoulder scarves, a probably later incised Yongle mark!), produced possibly by a Newar artist at the imperial

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[64] Shakyamuni, height 19,5 cm, Christie's New York 21.3.2001, no.85. Compare for example with a "pure" Yongle style Shakyamuni in the Palace Museum, Beijing. Buddhist Statues of Tibet. The Complete Collection of Treasures of the Qing Palace Museum, vol.60, Beijing/Hongkong 2003, no.212. See also von Schroeder 2001, op.cit., vol.II, 344 C.

[65] Cf. Council International Auction Co., Beijing, 3.12.2007, no.1793, height: 29,7 cm. According to the catalogue text with a Da Ming Yongle nian shi reign mark "on the lower border(!) of the pedestal", which would be quite unusual for an inscribed image of the period. Thus by inscription and style this statue cannot be properly identified.

ateliers(?), which may have also served as a model for the characteristic "Yongle bronzes"[66](**fig. 45**). Another Nepalese style Vajradhara donated or installed according to its Chinese inscription (at the inner base) "in the fifth year of the Great Ming", i.e. in 1372, appears to have been manufactured in China after a Newar style prototype (**fig. 46**).[67]

3) a pure Newar style image (of a Newari artist in Beijing? Or a Chinese copy of a Newari prototype?) is inscribed with an apparently contemporary 12-character "mark" as being made "in the first year of the Xuande reign" (1426), however it was not manufactured in the imperial ateliers of this emperor (**fig. 47**).[68] Another purely Nepalese Shakyamuni, which was hardly produced in the imperial workshops, bears a six-character

[66] Vajradhara, height 30 cm, Christie's Hongkong 1.5.2000, no.753. Compare for example with a "pure" Nepalo-Tibetan gilt-copper Vajradhara with inlaid semi-precious stones in the Jules Speelman Collection, and Sotheby's New York 21.9.1995, no.55. In addition to group one and two compare some Tibetan copies of the Yongle style images: Essen/Thingo 1989, op.cit., no.35; H.Uhlig, On the Path to Enlightenment. The Berti Aschmann Foundation of Tibetan Art at the Rietberg Museum Zürich. Zürich 1995, no.94; Buddhist Statues of Tibet 2003, op.cit., no.168; von Schroeder 2001, op.cit., vol.II, 344 C (?), which may also belong to our group one since inlaid semi-precious stones – though in fact unusual for Yongle period statues – were used for Nepalese style images already in the Yuan period ateliers in Dadu (Beijing), compare for example a Manjushri image dated 1305, Buddhist Statues of Tibet 2003, op.cit., no.209.

[67] The inscription of this in view of its artistic and historical attribution enigmatic statue reads: Da Ming wu nian er yue tu si jing li (catalogue text). The face as seen from profile, the drapery of the scarves around the shoulder, the slightly awkward design of the double-lotus, and the gold-lacquered technique indicate a Chinese manufacture after a Nepalese model. See Nagel auction sale, stuttgart, 12.11.2007, no.784.

[68] Fig. 47: Shakyamuni, height 16 cm, dated 1426, Palace Museum, Beijing. Iconography and Styles. Tibetan Statues in the Palace Museum. Beijing 2002, vol.I., no.70; The twelve(!)-character inscription on this statue "made on March 10, in the first year of the Xuande [reign]" is however not a signature of the imperial workshop! - Fig. 48: Shakyamuni, height 18,5 cm, art trade Switzerland (unpublished). According to Li Jing (Beijing) the inscription of the latter image has been added in the 18th century due to a minor variation of the fourth character from left, which would indicate a Qing dynasty date as it is known for bronze vessels and porcelain.

Xuande mark added to the image during or soon after the reign period of this emperor (1425-35) **(fig. 48).**

A characteristic feature of the "Yongle bronzes" is the slightly crumpled and lavishly curved drapery of the shoulder scarves composed around the figure's upper body (no.61). This motif recalls similar garment styles (and models!) in 13th century Song and early Yuan dynasty sculpture and painting such as for example a "Tibeto-Chinese" painted scroll of the late 13th century depicting a seated Avalokiteshvara in the Freer Gallery in Washington. And likewise can the two characteristic streamers falling over the lotus base of many post-Yongle and –Xuande statues be traced back to Chinese paintings and kesi fabric images of the Song and early Yuan period.[69]

With reference to the illustrations of the Yongle-Kanjur (around 1410), which were very probably drawn by artists from Nepal or Tibet, von Schroeder rightly credits craftsmen of those countries as having "played an active part in the development of this new Tibeto-Chinese school" [68] but has not been able to identify safely a single Yongle or Xuande period statue as a work of a Tibetan or Newari artist produced in the imperial ateliers. A very difficult problem, indeed, to which my own contributions here may be regarded more as suggestions than as definitive answers.

[69] The motif of the drapery streamers can be found on two kesi images of the circa late 13th century in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (see Henss 1997, fig.1), which must have been woven after painted models such as a hanging scroll depicting a seated Avalokiteshvara in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington (image: 62x53 cm, see www.asia.si.edu /collections/singleobject.cfm? Object Jd-7565). This motif is usually not shown by single images on a double-lotus before the Zhengtong reign period (1436-49), see hower for an Amitabha statue (height: 57 cm!) with a Xuande reign mark of the period (catalogue text) at Sotheby's New York, 25.3.1999, no.121, and for a Vajradhara in the Beijing Capital Museum dated by inscription to 1436 (fig.36). The only known Yongle period statue with these two streamers is a Marici riding on a pig, see no.61 and p.361 in the Villa Hügel catalogue.

I cannot recognize among the great bulk of the Yongle and Xuande sculptures a different degree of stylistic sinization as it is stated in the catalogue for the Yongle dPal ldan Lha mo image from the Lhasa museum (no.65), which is not "more Tibetan" or less Chinese than other statues bearing the imperial signature. In this case iconography has been misunderstood as style: figures of wrathful deities in Tibetan art present oftenly greater difficulties for stylistic determination than those, whose posture, garment, and various adornments offer better clues for an art historical chronology.

With no doubt the extensive production of Tibetan style art at the early Ming court was partly motivated by political considerations in order to continue Mongol-Tibetan relations under the Yuan. The catalogue text on the Yongle statues however largely excludes emperor Zhu Di's strong and – with regard to cultural court politics – very effective personal interest in Tibetan Buddhist religion and art. How Buddhist was this Han-Chinese ruler, whose father had been a Buddhist monk in his young age and whose wife, Empress Xu (d.1407), wrote a sutra on the Buddhist great virtues describing her spiritual communication with the bodhisattva Guanyin, who prophesied that Zhu Di would become the next emperor? No doubt were the production of hundreds of Tibetan style images and the publication of a monumental Tripitaka edition (1420 ff) and of the so significant first printing of the Tibetan Canon, known as the "Yongle-Kanjur" and completed in 1410 by his own words in the colophon, more personally than politically motivated: "The merit it brings to us cannot be described in words". And different from Khubilai Khan and from the Qianlong emperor, the tantric initiations bestowed upon Ming Chengzu (Zhu Di's posthumous honorific title) did not serve to make him a "sacred King" and cakravartin or a bodhisattva-emperor.[70] No mention is made of his fervent conversion to

[70] The Yongle emperor's private attachment to Tibetan Buddhism is further very impressively documented by the famous "Tsurphu Scroll" painting (datable to 1407) in the Tibet Museum at Lhasa, see Precious Deposits 2000, op.cit., vol.III, no.48, and D.Berger, Miracles in Nanjing: An Imperial Record of the Fifth Karmapa's Visit to the Chinese Capital. In: Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism, ed. by M.

Tibetan Buddhism. A Buddhist monk, Daoyuan (Yao Guangxiao), was his closest adviser throughout his life. And "no Chinese emperor treated any Buddhist eminences with the same degree of deference, amounting to object adulation".[71] – How much appreciated were those Tibetan style statues of the early Ming even 300 years later at the place of their origin is documented by the Kangxi emperor's (r.1662-1722) great admiration, who, when "sitting in a palace hall, built by the Yongle Emperor, ordered a palace eunuch to bring out a Yongle image of Amitayus. He looked over the magnificent work and sighed to the high minister standing beside him: In the old Buddhist images of Tibet nothing is more important than li ma (metal image). The images cast in the Yongle era first among these".[72]

On reign marks and style of Buddhist images in the early Ming dynasty period

The imperial six-character reign mark Da Ming Yongle-le nian shi

Three gilt copper statues, the lotus mandala and the Cakrasamvara silk brocade banner (nos.37, 53, 61, 65, 75) are inscribed with the six-character reign mark of the Yongle emperor, which means that they have been produced during the reign (Chin. nian) of Zhu Di, the Yongle emperor (1403-24): Da Ming Yong le nian shi, "dedicated (or donated, bestowed) during the Yongle era of the Great Ming". This imperial reign mark (Chin. nian hao) was introduced by emperor Ming Chengzu into Tibeto-Chinese Buddhist art like for gilt copper statues and, in a

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Weidner, Honolulu 2001, p.145-169. See also E.H.Sperling 1983, op.cit., passim; Shih-Shan Henry Tsai, Perpetual Happiness. The Ming Emperor Yongle. Seattle 2003, p.143f.

[71] J. Watt/D.P.Leidy, Defining Yongle. Imperial Art in Early Fifteenth Century China, New York 2005, p.10.

[72] After The Sublime Grandeur of Yongle Imperial Bronzes. Hanhai Autumn Auction, Beijing 2006, p.14 (without reference).

few cases, for embroidered silk thangkas, painted scrolls and ritual objects.

Authentic or later Yongle and Xuande reign marks

Whereas the "Yongle reign mark of the period" as a common terminus technicus is contemporary with the image, a "Yongle six character mark"must not necessarily date to the Yongle period, but may have been added at a later time. While a "genuine" reign mark (of the period) was always incised on the upper lotus pedestal of the front side of the image, laterYongle and Xuande marks were engraved either on the lower rim of the double-lotus or somewhere on the backside of the base (**figs. 45, 49**).[73] An interesting specific detail of a later incised reign mark is in at least two cases **(figs. 45, 47)** a minor variation of the fourth character from left of the six-character Yongle and Xuande marks, which does not exactly correspond to the authentic reign marks of the period. – All Yongle and Xuande marks "of the period" on gilt copper images are inscribed like "in the Tibetan way" from left to right, whereas on a few successive gilt copper statues as well as on porcelain

[73] The inscribed Yongle mark of the Vajradhara fig.45 is in comparism with authentic reign marks of an almost surprisingly uniform appearance. – Later Yongle marks were added to several Tibeto-Chinese style images from the post-Xuande period until the Qianlong era in the 18th century. See for example an Avalokiteshvara Padmapani statue (seated in "reverse" position, the six-character mark from right to left) in the Beijing Palace Museum, dating probably to the Zhenghua period 1465-1487, fig.49, Iconography and Styles, 2002, vol.II, no.99. Or a 33,2 cm high standing Shakyamuni of ca. mid-15th century, polychromed zitan wood, with a nine-character inscription Da Ming Yong Le nian yu gong jing zao, "Respectfully made (zao!) for the altar in the Yongle reign period of the Great Ming", Christie's New York 20.3.2002, no.69. – For Nepalese style images with later added Yongle and Xuande inscriptions see fig.45 and 48, -At least two statues of the Qianlong period (1736-1795) with Yongle marks exist in the Beijing Capital Museum(oral information by curator Huang Chunhe, 2.12.2007). – Xuande marks were occasionally copied for 18th century porcelain or added much later on to 15th century cloisonné ware like to a dish-shaped cup in the Pierre Uldry Collection(Zürich) at about 1600 or later, cf. Brinker/Lutz 1989, pl.23 and p.75.

and cloisonné since the Xuande era the horizontally written marks are from right to left.

"Dedicated" (s h i) or just "produced" (z h i) during the early Ming emperor's reign?

The usual Yongle and Xuande reign mark Da Ming Yongle (Xuande) nian shi on Tibeto-Chinese works of art manufactured between 1407 and 1435 ends with "shi", "dedicated", "donated", or "bestowed", which refers to Buddhist imagery such as gilt copper statues and lotus mandalas, precious fabric banners and, though quite rarely, to important Buddhist paintings, all coming from the imperial court ateliers. Thus "shi" is associated with a religious or spiritual meaning of the object. It is believed by some scholars that images bearing this inscription were designated generally "for export", that means produced as gifts for Tibetan dignitaries in Tibet or when coming to the imperial court.[74] A fine "imperial quality" statue of Avalokiteshvara Padmapani(?) in the Beijing Palace Museum (height: 29 cm, fig.49) dating on stylistic grounds to the circa mid-15th century or slightly later is inscribed from right to left(!) with a six-character Yongle mark on the lower rim of the double-lotus "Da Ming Yongle nian z h i ", which means "produced" instead of "dedicated" (shi), indicating that the image was not manufactured in the court ateliers, but some time after the Yongle reign period.[75]

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[74] Yongle and Xuande style images without a reign mark would have been manufactured instead for local use at the court or for other temples of esoteric Buddhism in the capital (Huang Chunhe, personal communication, 2.12.2007), a speculative and probably disputable theory. Many of the fabric thangkas once given by the Yongle and Xuande emperors to Tibetan hierarchs and monasteries do not have a reign mark! – For the rare Yongle reign marks on painted scrolls see Sotheby's New York, 21.9.2007, no.33.

[75] Iconography and Styles 2002, vol.II, no.99. For Yongle and Xuande reign marks added to lacquerware of the Hongwu period (1368-98) see Lee King-tsi/Hu Shih-chang 2001 and 2005. – For imperial reign marks of the early Ming on porcelain, lacquerware and cloisonné see Chen Kelun 2004, p.28-41; Watt/Leidy 2005, pl.6; Lee

Ritual objects of esoteric Buddhism in the Yongle style are either inscribed as "dedicated", shi, when made in the imperial workshops for Tibetan hierarchs and monasteries, or as "produced", z h i (or zao) when they were they were made "in the period" or probably also in eastern Tibet after prototypes from the imperial ateliers. Only six ritual intruments or sets with a Yongle reign mark from the period and one ritual axe (and set) with a four-character mark of the Hongwu era (1368-98) are known.[76] Therefore this hypothesis is only temptative and it cannot be completely ruled out that for these non-figural artefacts both reign marks were used in the imperial workshops or that some of them had been "made" (zhi) for local use at the court and thus were eventually not inscribed as "dedicated" (shi). A very good and highly significant example of a Tibetan-Buddhist ritual object made for a Beijing temple is a huge butter-lamp of 102 cm in height and in diameter with a six-character reign mark of the Jingtai emperor (r.1450-57, written from right to left) Da Ming Jing tai nian zhi, "produced during the reign period of the Jingtai emperor", in a Dutch private collection, which was shown in the exhibition "The Dalai Lamas" in the World Museum, Rotterdam, in 2006/2007 **(fig. 131).** – Even without the Yon-

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King-tsi/Hu Shih chang 2001, fig.6b (see also the same authors 2005); Brinker/Lutz 1989, no.1, p.74ff; Garner 1962, pl.10A, 11, 13B,C, 95A,B,C,E.

[76] Khaṭvāṅga, British Museum London, cf.Zwalf 1985, no.307; Bazin 2002, no. 101; Khaṭvāṅga, Metropolitan Museum New York, cf. Watt/Leidy 2005, pl.27; ritual fire spoon, Metropolitan Museum New York, cf. Watt/Leidy 2005, pl.29; Khaṭvāṅga, Sotheby's London 10.7.1973, no.45 (said to come from Tsurphu monastery); ritual hammer, Sotheby's London 24.4.1997, no.122; Bazin 2002, no. 109; ritual axe, hammer and hook, John Eskenazi (London), Arts of Asia, November 1997 (advertisment). For three of these six objects the Yongle marks are known: cf. Watt/Leidy 2005, pl.27 ("zhi"), idem, pl.29 ("shi"), and Sotheby's London 24.4.1997, no.122 ("zhi"). For the only known Hongwu emperor ritual axe (and set) with a four-character mark Hong wu nian zhi, "made in the Hongwu reign era", in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts see Selected Masterpieces of Asian Art. Boston 1992, no.125, with illustration (motives and style of the inlaid iron, gold and silver work do correspond exactly to the Yongle period ritual objects as quoted above). Is this so far the only known reign mark of the Hongwu emperor on a Tibetan Buddhist work of art?

gle and Xuande statues of the Capital Museum (all with reign mark ending with shi) there are at least circa 20 more in Beijing (Palace Museum, National Museum of China), which most probably have been there since the early 15th century, once installed in the imperial and "municipal" Tibetan Buddhist shrines of the Ming capital.

Reign mark or multi-character inscription

While six-character reign marks are usually known from Tibetan style statues made at the court only under the Yongle and Xuande emperor (r.1403-24, 1425-35), multi character marks and longer inscriptions were used instead – if there were any – during the successive Zhengtong (r.1436-49), Jingtai (r.1450-57), and Zhenghua (r.1465-87) eras. The earlier homogenous "corporate identity" production of Buddhist images for Tibetan lamas and their temples inside and outside the imperial palace did no longer exist. Despite the revival of esoteric Buddhism under the Zhenghua emperor the great passion for and the commitment to "Lamaism" of the early years was fading away towards the second half of the 15th century. The highquality level of the Golden Age from circa 1407 to 1435 became more and more a stylistic convention when innovation was replaced by re-production combined with an increasing syncretism and sinization in iconography and style (faces!). These art historical trends should be kept in mind for an ongoing discussion of Tibeto-Chinese art in the 15th century.

Although quite naturally the Yongle and Xuande standard did not decline from one year to the other two gilt copper images cast according to their long inscriptions (on the lower rim of the double-lotus and on the bottom plate!) in the first year of the Zhengtong reign (1436) may illustrate the gradual change of the artistic quality. While the Vajradhara in the Beijing Capital Museum from the same year **(fig. 36)** corresponds grosso modo to the aesthetic criteria of the previous Xuande sculptures despite the slightly less refined jewelry work, an Avalokitshvara Padmapani now in the Rietberg Museum, Zürich, dated by inscription also to 1436 **(fig. 50)** does not equal anymore to the top level statues bearing

the Xuande reign mark.[77] According to their inscriptions both images were just produced in the first year of the Zhengtong reign, however not or no more in the imperial workshops.

Three other inscribed and dated statues of Bhaiṣajyaguru and Shakyamuni bearing instead of a "reign mark" (ending shi) a longer inscription (ending zhi) may illustrate on the one side a "non-imperial" classical Chinese Buddha type of the Yuan and early Ming tradition (Beijing, Capital Museum, height: 85 cm, dated 1450; art trade, height: 37 cm, dated 1437, **figs. 51, 52**), and on the other side the specific "Tibeto-Chinese" Yongle and Xuande court style in the sense of a revival and of a stylistic copy several decades later (art trade, height: 37 cm, dated 1467, **fig. 53**).[78]

Yongle style figures and related Tibeto-Chinese metal images of the 15th century don't normally have a Tibetan inscription or a Tibetan version of the Chinese multi-character mark. Except the large Yongle-marked bodhisattva in the Musée Cernuschi, Paris, the only other "bilingual" statue of that era known to me is a seated Avalokiteshvara with a Yongle reign mark of the period (Da Ming Yong le nian shi) and with a Tibetan inscription, rGya nag thugs dam ma byams pa la na mo, on the backside of the lower rim of the lotus pedestal (Hanhai Spring Auction, Beijing, 11.5.2008, no.1770, height: 21 cm). This inscription indicates clearly that the image was made in China and brought very soon to Tibet, but takes for "Maitreya" what actually had been composed as an Avalokiteshvara holding in his right hand the bottle of ambrosia-water (Sanskr.: kamaṇḍalu or kuṇḍikā), a characteristic attribute of the Chinese

[77] Compare for example von Schroeder 2001, 359C.

[78] For the Medicine Buddha in the Capital Museum see Hang Yang/Huang Chunhe 2001, plate 115,116; for the image in the art trade see Hanhai Autumn Auction, Beijing 22.11.2004, no.2507. An interesting and quite significant stylistic difference is documented by an early Zhenghua Buddha in the Yongle-Xuande tradition, dated 1467, see Christie's London 7.11.2006, no.126, and an exquisit very Chinese late Zhenghua Vairocana dated 1486 in Taipei, cf. Chang Foundation 1993, no.16.

Avalokiteshvara-Guanyin, which however, not giving attention to the small Amitābha Buddha in the headdress, was misunderstood in the Tibetan inscription as bodhisattva Maitreya ("byams pa"). Thus inscription and iconography make this Avalokiteshvara a unique example among all existing Yongle reign mark statues of the period (1403-24).

Are there any Yongle and Xuande statues "of the period" without a reign mark?

The hypothesis that the Yongle and Xuande ateliers would have produced unmarked images for the ritual needs at the Court and for local Buddhist temples, while all statues for "export" to Tibet and for Tibetan dignitaries have been signed with the imperial reign mark, appears to be questionable. With much probability were all Tibetan style sculptures coming from the imperial workshops during those thirty years incised with the reign mark as a kind of first quality label and as a proof of reference and provenance. As far as I can see this imperial "control signature" was practised for image – making only under these two Ming emperors, who are both wellknown for their great personal interest in Tibetan Buddhism. This is confirmed by the extant material. And it seems to be quite difficult to identify a single unmarked image of the usual court style quality, which would have been manufactured in the Yongle and Xuande ateliers and not eventually by an ex-Yongle or – Xuande top artist at sometime after 1435! – Although a fine crowned Akshobhya in the Chang Foundation **(fig. 54)** and a crowned Amitābha in the Rietberg Museum Zürich[79], both without mark, are grosso modo of equal workmanship and artistic quality compared with the marked Yongle and Xuande statues, the details of the jewelry adorning the upper

[79] Chang Foundation 1993, no.3; Uhlig 1995, no.33. Other uninscribed statues of "court quality" associated with the Xuande period like an Avalokiteshvara at Christie's New York 20.3.2002, no.72 (height: 42 cm) indicate rather a Zhengtong period date or can be attributed to the years after like for example Christie's New York 19.9.2002, no.86 (height: 38 cm).

body or of the crown are less clear – shaped and finely executed than with the reign-marked prototypes.

One of these very few uninscribed Yongle style images of "reign mark quality" is the wellknown crowned Buddha in the Newark Museum, which because of its considerable size (height: 47 cm) and its acquisition history may have belonged once to a Buddhist temple in Beijing (**fig. 55**).[80] The missing reign mark, the unusual iconography, the facial features and proportions,the more densely and graphically drawn jewelry work of the crown, and the sheer size of this fine statue indicate alltogether a post-Xuande reign date and point out to the Zhengtong (1436-49) or Jingtai period (1450-57). The design or rather the "drawing" of the lotus base does not really correspond to the Yongle or Xuande style and technique. [81]

A few monumental gilt copper sculptures of an exceptional court style quality are unmarked as well (at least in so far since they have no more the original base): two 51,5 and 58 cm high Mahākāla statues and a 80

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[80] Cf. Reynolds et al.1986, p.92-92 ("China, 15th century"); Bills 1994, fig.23: "Xuande period" (without any arguments); Rhie/Thurman 1996, no.146: "early 15th century". Like for most of the Yongle and Xuande statues in the Palace Museum and National Museum of China (see Iconography and Styles 2002, no.95,99,121; Fo Xiang Yishu Jingcui 2006, ill.p.89,169,190f., 200-203,224f., 240-243: only one image with traces of cold-gilding!), which have been always kept in Beijing, the face of the Newark Buddha was – different from the Tibetan tradition – obviously never cold-gilded. This means on the one side that the image was produced for local use, and on the other side (no mark, style!) that in view of its superb quality the missing reign mark would indicate a post-Xuande date anyway. – For the Akshobhya and Amitābha see Chang Foundation 1993, no.3, and Uhlig 1995, no.33. Compare also an Avalokiteshvara in the Cleveland Museum of Art, Bills 1994, fig.25.

[81] Though different by its individual style a large ungilt statue of Mañjushri without a reign mark or inscription in the Beijing Capital Museum is believed to be a "Yongle image" coming once from a local temple, but appears to represent likewise a post-Xuande period. – That imperial marks were occasionally erased (in order to incise the signature of an successive emperor) is known from lacquerware of the Hongwu period, but I am aware of only a single Yongle Green Tara, whose reign mark has been most probably effaced, cf. Christie's New York 19.9.2002, no.85; Lee King-tsi/Hu Shi-chang 2001 and 2005.

cm tall Vajrabhairava.[82] By their bodily forms, facial features and rich decorational technique they may likewise date to the circa mid-15th century. And it would be difficult to believe that such heavy images had been carried to Tibet with Buddhist hierarchs and Chinese missions, particularly at a time when hardly anymore early Ming images of imperial manufacture were brought to Lhasa and beyond. And similarly must have been commissioned for a Beijing temple a 57 cm large crowned Amitābha with a Xuande reign mark of the period, which was offered at Sotheby's New York in 1999, a grand masterpiece of early Tibeto-Chinese Ming art and one of the most important statues of the "Yongle style" to exist.[83]

Only two gilt metal statues of large size with a Yongle reign mark have been preserved: a 145 cm tall bodhisattva datable to circa 1418 (from a set of eight images) in the Qinghai Provincial Museum at Xining, originally from Qutan monastery (Tib. Gro tshang rdo rje chang), located in eastern Qinghai province between Lanzhou and Xining, which was under the direct imperial patronage aspart of the Sino-Tibetan border strategy since the late 14th century. Probably from the same set once at Qutan si is the bodhisattva with a six-character Yongle reign mark in the Musée Cernuschi, Paris (height: 137cm). Both were apparently manufactured in the imperial ateliers in Beijing and then sent to Qutan monastery like the no more existing central Buddha image.[84]

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[82] Cf. The Crucible of Compassion 1987, plate 32; sotheby's New York 26.3.1998, no.161; Sotheby's New York 25.3.1999, no.122.

[83] Cf. Sotheby's New York 25.3.1999, no.121 (without the precise transcription of the reign mark). This is the only monumental marked statue of the Yongle and Xuande period to exist, and the earliest statue with the characteristic drapery streamers falling over the lotus base.

[84] For the statue in Xining see: Qutansi. Xining 2000, p.204 (ill.), and Debreczeny 2003, p.55 and fig.18. – The construction dates of the temple halls, where the image was once installed, are 1418 and 1427. For the statue in the Musée Cernuschi see von Schroeder 1981, 151E: "15th/16th century" without reference to the inscription, which is additionally incised in Tibetan and lan tsha.

Did private workshops for these court style images exist at all next to the imperial factory, especially during the Yongle and Xuande reign period to produce (unmarked) less refined statues in the same style? Or have we to attribute all images of a more modest quality to the later post-Xuande era?

Tibeto-Chinese art promoted and produced under those early Ming emperors can be characterised for political and personal reasons as an exclusive court style, which was limited to the imperial ateliers since the Yongle emperor's first direct encounter with Tibetan Buddhism and its hierarchs in 1407. The relocation of the Ming capital to Beijing was completed only in 1421 and it is difficult to imagine that in those years unmarked "second class" images of the same style were produced by non-imperial workshops outside the court.

The "Yongle Style" after the Golden Age – towards the second half of the 15th century.

There is still much uncertainty and speculation about the "Yongle legacy" in Tibeto-Chinese sculpture of the 15th and 16th century, mainly with regard to chronology and a more precise art historical identification. It does not surprise that the formative court style of the Yongle and Xuande period remained the artistic standard and guideline during the Zhengtong reign era (1436-49) and the years after.

A gradual sinization of the Tibetan style imagery can be noticed in the successive decades. Different atelier traditions were no longer obliged to the specific aesthetic formulas as practised under the "tibetophile" early Ming rulers. Iconographic syncretism and stylistic ecclecticism characterise quite a few images beyond the Indo-Tibetan canon and conventions. The revival of Tibetan Buddhism during the Zhenghua reign period (1465-87) is wellknown by a group of dated painted scrolls, but has not yet been documented for metal figures of the same period. What was in the second half of the 15th century Tibeto-Chinese sculpture of the Yongle tradition alike?

A “group” of gilt and ungilt statues with several common elements in motif and style may illustrate here the Yongle heritage in its later phase. Similar facial proportions and physiognomic features, a rather graphically drawn garment and rich jewelry style, or the design of the lotus base and the two overlapping drapery streamers of an Avalokiteshvara with a Zhenghua six-character mark **(fig. 56)** [85] can be also found with some other images dating probably to the same period such as an exquisite large Amoghasiddhi **(fig. 57)** [86] or a Medicine Buddha **(fig. 58).**[87] Quite a few of these statues have a more distinctive Chinese face, which seems to indicate a greater stylistic variety when some fifty years later the Yongle canon was no more the exclusive convention in Buddhist art at the imperial court and beyond.[88]

The Yongle Legacy in Tibet

Not much better investigated than the Tibetan prototypes of the Yongle style statues are, so to say on the way back from Beijing to Lhasa, the Tibetan reflections of these Buddhist images made in the Ming court ateliers, which were presented to Tibetan monks and monasteries in considerable quantity at several visits to the court and during at least six

[85] Poly Auction, Beijing 1.12.2007, no.979. The (later incised?) “Chenghua six-character mark” (catalogue text), which cannot be recognized in the illustration, must be incised on the back of the lotus throne. Note the composite iconography: Amitābha figure on top (Avalokiteshvara) vase (Maitreya), book (Manjushri), mudra of his right hand (Bhaiṣajyaguru)!

[86] Galerie Jacques Barrère, Paris 2007 (catalogue:“early 15th century”).

[87] Galerie Koller, Zürich 22.9.2007, no.104. – Compare two similar statues: Amitābha, Lempertz Auction, Köln 7.12.2007, no.725 (48 cm, “17th century”); Avalokiteshvara, Christie’s Hongkong 3.11.1998, no.1014 (ungilt, 52 cm, “second half of the 15th century”).

[88] This stylistic variety of the “Yongle heritage” in the second half of the 15th century can be illustrated by a good number of other statues. See for example Chang Foundation 1993, no.32,33. A statue like no.55 of this collection raises however the question in how far Yongle style images were either copied in less refined quality outside the Palace ateliers at the same period or (still) decades later?

imperial missions to Tibet between 1408 and 1419.[89] Of major importance for those Sino-Tibetan relations of the early Ming was the Gyantse principality in southern Tibet, where in 1413 a large imperial delegation arrived from China, certainly not without silks and statues. And there is ample evidence for various Yongle style inspirations on the sculptures and paintings at Pelkhor Chöde monastery(dPal 'khor Chos sde)[90] such as the elegant draperies of the robes, the long fluttering scarves and the fine jewelry work just to mention a few characteristics of thoseTibeto-Chinese images, which one can discover in the Gyantse murals as well. Thus it cannot surprise to find also Yongle style-influenced Sino-Tibetan statues made by Newari artists probably in the Sakya milieu at Gyantse around 1415/30.[91] And that Yongle stilistic patterns remained the guidelines for some of the best Tibetan image-makers until the later 15th century is illustrated by a few exquisite gilt copper monk portrait figures datable to circa 1479, which were published only recently.[92]

Among the six metal images of the Yongle era shown in this exhibition, an 82 cm high (58 cm when open) gilt copper lotus mandala of Vajrabhairava (as inscribed in Chinese and Tibetan at the top of the lotus, **figs. 59, 60, 61**) from the Lhasa museum (formerly kept in the Potala Palace and published in the catalogue under no.75) was supposed to be shown in the exhibition but was withdrawn for unknown reasons. Instead a Cakrasamvara mandala of the same set was given on loan (not

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[89] Cf. Karmay 1975, p.79; Ricca/Lo Bue 1993, p.19. Buddhist images were brought with seven Tibetan missions to the Ming court between 1406 and 1417. And no doubt were many "Yongle images" sent with six Chinese embassies to Tibet between 1408 and 1419 or later on.

[90] 89 Cf. Henss forthcoming, ch.XI.2; for a few details see also Karmay 1975, p.27,58f.; Lo Bue 2002, p.198f.; Ricca/Lo Bue 1993, plate 16.

[91] See for example a superb Green Tara with silver and copper inlays on the dhoti (compare similar murals in the Gyantse Kumbum stupa from 1427-39!) in the Rietberg Museum, Zürich, Uhlig 1995, no.94; Bills 1994, fig.11; or another Tara (or Avalokiteshvara?) at Christie's New York 21.3.2008, no.652 ("a precursor and prototype for the Yongle style").

[92] Cf. Sotheby's New York 19.3.2008, no.304-306 (garment style, lotus pedestal).

recorded in the catalogue), whose original cover of the lotus bud (when closed) is apparently missing and now has been replaced for the exhibition by the equivalent "umbrella" piece of the wellknown Hevajra mandala from the Potala collection, inscribed "Kye rdo rje" **(fig. 62).** When preparing the exhibition in 2005, Gregor Verhufen from Bonn University, a member of the organising team, had seen at least two more lotus mandalas of this series in the Potala's Li ma lha khang (one without the original figure of the central deity), which are most probably identical with those photographed by the reviewer in 1992 **(fig. 63),** when two more fragmentarily preserved Yongle lotus mandalas were seen at the same place. Thus six additional mandalas can be identified now, or all together nine still existing lotus mandalas of the Potala Yongle reign set, including the Rakta Yamāri mandala at Sakya monastery and a Herukavajra(?) mandala, which was formerly at Ngor monastery **(fig. 64).**[93]

With regard to its partly Gelugpa-related iconography (Vajrabhairava), these artistic and technical masterpieces may have been donated by the Yongle emperor (with the six character reign mark at the base) to one of the Three Great Seats, Ganden, Drepung or Sera, sometime between Shakya Ye she's first visit at the imperial court in 1415 and 1425. However, one cannot rule out the possibility that it was originally made for a court shrine and only given to Tibet at a later period. These three-dimensional mandala sculptures have no Tibetan models and document beyond their formal and technical perfectness – "made on imperial command" – the highly creative production of Tibetan-Buddhist art under the Yongle reign. To characterise them as "nearly perfect copies" of Indian Pala period lotus mandalas (Amy Heller in her essay, p.88) would clearly underestimate their modified and developed individual form and decoration.

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[93] Cf. Tucci 1949, vol.I, fig.86 (photo only of the closed lotus bud). Another photo of the Tucci expedition (1939) in the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale in Rome, Tucci photographic archives no.6105/24, gives a complete view of this Herukavajra(?), which in comparism with the Yongle Hevajra mandala in the Potala Palace cannot be exactly identified.

The prototypes of this genius ritual object had been designed, though smaller in size and of more simple form, in Pala India during the 11th and 12th century. One of these Indian forerunners was selected for this exhibition (no.74). One would have prefered, however, a more analogous and richly designed Indian lotus mandala with a higher stalk and some figural and ornamental decoration as they exist in the Lhasa Jo khang and elsewhere **(fig. 65).**[94] Two other Yongle lotus mandalas of exactly of the same size and composition – and of the same workshop – have survived in complete condition: in the Potala Palace (Hevajra) and in Sakya monastery (Raktayamāri), here preserved, though almost unvisible, in the southern Phur khang side hall, high up in the shelves for precious statuary.[95] Based on the texts and on iconography there is

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[94] See also von Schroeder 2001, op.cit., pl.103C and 104C; Precious Deposits 2000, op.cit., vol.II, no.45 (unknown location in Tibet); and for the most similar Pala prototype: Iconography and Styles. Tibetan Statues in the Palace Museum, ed. by the Palace Museum, Beijing 2002, vol.I, no.36, and especially a 43cm high Indian Cakrasamvara mandala in the Beijing Palace Museum, Wang Jiapeng 2003 (vol.60), no. 55.

[95] von Schroeder 2001, op.cit., pl.349 B, 351B. – I was able to see two fragmentarily preserved Yongle style lotus mandalas in the Potala Palace on June 16, 2000. For the information that there would have existed originally a set of 14 Yongle lotus mandalas I have to thank Prof. Markus Speidel.

A temptative identification of nine (of originally 14?) lotus mandalas of the "Yongle reign series":

1. Lhasa, Tibet Museum (formerly Potala Palace): Vajrabhairava; von Schroeder 2001, 350 A/B
2. Lhasa, Potala Palace: Hevajra; von Schroeder 2001, 351 A/B
3. Sakya monastery: Yamari; von Schroeder 2001, 349 B
4. Lhasa, Potala Palace: Cakrasamvara; partly shown in the Museum Villa Hügel exhibition, but not in the catalogue. Unpublished photo by G.Verhufen
5. Lhasa, Potala Palace; photo M.Henss 1992 and G.Verhufen 2005
6. Lhasa, Potala Palace; photo M.Henss 1992
7. Lhasa, Potala Palace (fragment), recorded by M.Henss 2000
8. Lhasa, Potala Palace (fragment), recorded by M.Henss 2000
9. Ngor monastery: unspecified form of Hevajra (no more extant); photo in G.Tucci, Tibetan Painted Scrolls. Rome 1949, vol.I, fig.86.

A photograph of the complete mandala exists in the Tucci photographic archives in Rome, Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale, no.6105/24.

good reason that these three mandalas and two others still kept in the Potala Palace (without the original stalk, one of them with the Yongle reign mark) once have formed a set of fourteen lotus mandalas.

Less spectacular but not much easier to find than a lotus mandala is a 29cm high gilt copper Prātihārya-stupa with the Yongle reign mark of the imperial workshops (no.23). Representing a new type of stupa next to the common Tibetan "Kadampa chörten" of the 13th and 14th centuries, it was probably also inspired by Newari models. Yongle stupas are very rare and except at least two more of the same set in the Lhasa museum probably only three other of a more simple ungilt type do exist.[96] The catalogue text does not go beyond a brief general description of the stupa in general, though one may understand that the author, Niels Gutschow, being more familiar with the Kathmandu Valley, gives priority to a less significant Nepalese chörten (no.25).

A monographic publication on the over 300 existing Yongle and Xuande statues and on their various stylistic derivates would be indeed overdue.And such a project may well come into being under the favorable auspices of a recently found 32 cm high Precious Elephant with a Yongle reign mark of the period bearing the wish-fulfilling jewel on its back, one of the seven emblems of royal power symbolising the universal rule and the strength of the Cakravartin and of the Buddha.

A special and literally eye-catching attraction of the exhibition are three extraordinary large "Kadampa Chörten" (bKa' gdams pa mChod rten) from Mindröl Ling monastery **(fig. 66).** They represent the most common bell-shaped mahāparinirvāna stupa type in Tibet, of which hundreds in smaller size are preserved in Tibetan temples (no.24; height: 108, 162, 196 cm). One would have prefered, however, a more detailed catalogue text on this characteristic metal chörten type instead of a largely general description of the Buddhist stupa. A still taller copy of

[96] Cf. Tibet Museum 2001, p.96, fig.3 (height: 28 cm; see also Jinse Baozang 2001, p.188), and p.180/181, fig.1 and 4 (height: 28,5,cm); The Potala 1996, p.115.

these masterpieces of Tibetan metal casting has survived at sNye thang sGrol ma lha khang (height: 322 cm), the residence where Atisha, the father of the Kadampa school and credited with the introduction of the stupa cult in Tibet, spent the last ten years of his life. And it was exactly this type of brass reliquary which, following closely earlier models of the Indian Pala period, was successively called "Kadampa chörten".

With the exception of some 11th or 12th century stupas from India and their early Tibetan copies, which are characterised by more elongated proportions and by a different composition of the main body, all Kadampa stupas were designed in the same way. This does not allow a more precise dating for the great bulk of these reliquaries than to circa 1250-1350. And so far we don't know until when the stupas of this type were produced. An early date of the Mindröl Ling stupas to the 11th or 12th century as suggested in the catalogue text (by Niels Gutschow) is unlikely; it seems that this very type with its rather "canonical" formal vocabulary did not exist before the 13th century. A date to circa late 13th century or more probably to the 14th is indeed supported by some figural engravings on one of the five other stupas in Mindröl Ling, which is exactly of the same type and style as the three exhibited ones **(fig. 67).**

The art of Densa Thil

Among the gilt copper statues of specific importance with regard to provenance and style deserves special attention the magnificent four-armed female deity no.39, possibly one of the Pāramitās and correctly attributed to a Nepalese artist working for Tibetan patrons **(fig.68).** From a stylistic estimate the first half of the 15th century would be more convenient than a date to the 14th century. There is hardly any doubt that this image wirh inlaid semi-precious stones comes originally from Densa Thil (gDan sa mThil), the principal religious centre of the Pagmodrupa (Phag mo gru pa) dynasty, then the leading power in Tibet after the decline of the Sakya rule in the 14th century, located some 20 km east of Tsethang high above the northern banks of the Tsangpo river.

Like several other statues of the same style attributable to this once most important Kagyüpa monastery, which "among the abbeys of Tibet possessed the largest wealth" [97], this image now kept in the Tibet Museum at Lhasa, must have adorned one of the eight multi-storeyed tashigomang (bKra shis sgo mang) chörten, the "auspicious [stupa] with many doors (or images).[98] Those unique funeral and commemorative reliquary shrines of gilt repoussé and cast copper were praised in 1882 by the Indian pandita Sarat Chandra Das (1849-1917) as "beautiful silver and copper chörten, the finest specimens of such metal work I have seen".[99] Densa Thil and its exceptional monuments were completely destroyed during the "Cultural Revolution" (1966) in one of the most disastrous actions against Tibet's cultural heritage.

A considerable quantity of statues and fragments was successively brought to Beijing, where many of them have been kept since then in the Capital Museum to be partially displayed for the first time in the new building since 2005 (with an unknown number still in storage). A few single images were given to the Potala Palace or to the Jokhang and Ramoche temples.[100] Other turned up on the art market in the mid-1970s and many more within the last ten years, which were either belonging to those memorial chörten or manufactured in the workshops at Densa Thil and Drigung ('Bri gung) monasteries.[101] – According to my

[97] Pan chen bSod nams grags pa, Deb ther dmar po gsar ma (from 1529), cf. Tucci 1971, p.204.

[98] See on Densa Thil monastery von Schroeder 2001, vol.II, p.1006-1011; and with more details; Czaja 2006, and Henss forthcoming, ch.VI.9. From the totally 18 memorial stupas at Densa Thil only 8 were actually of the multi-door sKu 'bum or bKra shis sgo mang type as Olaf Czaja kindly informed me.

[99] Das 1902, p.227.

[100] See von Schroeder 2001, 260A, 260D, 262A. In 2005 I discovered five lokapāla statues (ca. 70 cm in height) of the Densa Thil style in the former residence room (gZim chung) of the 14th Dalai Lama on the upper floor of the Ramoche in Lhasa.

[101] For a selection of single seated statues: Oriental Art, 1975, no.3, p.215 (and von Schroeder 1981, 111E); Orientations, March 1993 (advertisment E.Abraham) and September 2005 (advertisment L.Coyle); Spink 1995, no.17; Sotheby's New York

own estimates at least over 45 individual sculptures of the proper Densa Thil style or from Densa Thil monastery respectively have survived, not including nearly 15 fragments of the lower protector frieze of the tashigomang depicting Nāgarāja, Mahākāla, Vaiśravaṇa, Rāhu, or Palden Lhamo, another 15 rectangular panels with groups of dancing devi-musicians from the next higher register, and an unknown quantity of caryatid pillars.[102] – The individual statues can be attributed to the original upper storeys of the stupa-like reliquary monuments once illustrating two multi-figured Vajradhātu and Guhyasamāja mandalas, and on top a Kagyü lineage assembly with Vajradhara, siddhas, dākinis, Indian and Tibetan masters **(fig. 126).** A temptative reconstruction of these prominent stupa architectures would result in a nine-storeyed plan:

1. adamantine base of circular plan with a design of alternative vajras and jewels.

2. protector frieze of circular plan with 24 images of Nāgarāja, Vaiśravaṇa, Palden Lhamo, Mahākāla, Rāhu, etc., each enclosed by round-shaped foliate scroll tendrils.

3. double lotus of circular plan with separate statues of the four lokāpalas in front.

4. frieze with dancing offering goddesses on square plan.

5. frieze of the Buddhas of the four directions on square plan, the central image surrounded by many smaller Buddhas of the same iconographic type.

6. Vajradhātu mandala frieze on square plan.

22.9.2000, no.73; Christie's New York 19.9.2001, no.115; 21.2007, no.121ff.; Christie's Paris 13.6.2007; Uhlig 1995, nos.31, 32.

[102] These figures are preliminary estimates - and partly tentative attributions - of so far published images (in quite a few cases in auction sale catalogues or as advertisment only) or of those, which are on display in temples (Ramoche) and museums (Capital Museum, Beijing).

7. Guhyasamāja mandala frieze on square plan.

8. Kagyü lineage assembly with 22 statues of Vajradhara, siddhas, dākinīs, Indian and Tibetan masters over an intermediary single lotus frieze on top of the actual tashigomang body.

9. relic stupa containing the corporal remains of the Densa Thil abbot (bKra shis 'od 'bar).[103]

Among the preserved single images associated here with Densa Thil are twelve multi-armed goddesses **(figs. 68, 69, 70, 71, 72),** six dākinīs (Vajrāvarāhi)[104], five bodhisattvas **(figs. 73, 74),** three tatāgathas **(figs. 75, 76)**, eight other deities, all between 26 and 35 cm in height, and nine lokapāla guardians standing once at the base of the tashigomang, all between 68 and 73 cm in height **(figs. 77, 78a, 78b).** At least two of these cosmic protectors can be identified with the original statues at Densa Thil, of which a few photographs were fortunately made by Francesco Mele during the Tucci expedition in 1948: the Vaiśravaṇa now in the Lhasa Ramoche and a Virūpākṣa in the Capital Museum in Beijing. The repoussé plaque with a Vairochana Buddha and two standing bodhisattvas just below these lokapāla statues on the Mele photo **(fig. 78b)** is now in a Paris private collection (height: ca. 100 cm).

Especially interesting are the numerous tantric Buddhist goddesses, which point out to individual iconographic programs realised only at Densa Thil.[105]

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[103] See Henss forthcoming, ch.VI.9, and for a reconstruction drawing of a Densa Thil tashigomang stupa and for a photograph from 1949 Czaja 2006, figs.4 and 8.

[104] A dākinī statue in the Rietberg Museum at Zürich is said to have come from Densa Thil, cf. Uhlig 1995, no.109.

[105] See for the multi-armed goddesses: von Schroeder 1981, 114D and E; also von Schroeder 2001, 260A, B and D, 262C; Spink 1995, no.17; Rossi 1994, no.22; Rossi 2007, no.9; Christie's New York 19.1.2001, no.115. For the dakinis for example: von Schroeder 1981, 120F; Sotheby's New York 30.11.1994, no.304; Uhlig 1995, no.109; Huntington/Bangdel 2003, no.111; Christie's New York 20.6.2006, no.130. A fragmentary dakini of the same style, which reportedly has come from Densa Thil (now private collection), was published by Stoddard 2002, p.446. – For the surviving lokapala

The presence of Newari craftsmen at the Densa Thil ateliers is not only confirmed by style, but also documented by inscriptions in devanāgāri on at least one of the surviving gilt copper relief plaques.

Outstanding for its supreme quality among the tantric images and closely related to the Densa Thil style is the gilt copper Vajravārāhi dākinī from the Potala Palace, no.59, probably the ultimate masterpiece of this type. This 15th century image, a grand figural and ornamental tantric highlight of dynamic movement and compositional balance, has been iconographically analysed in all details by Andreas Kretschmar, whose comprehensive texts for many other entries are among the most essential contributions to the exhibition's catalogue-handbook.

Great masterpieces of religious art are not only the result of individual craftsmanship, but also subject to specific periods in history. Thus the question might be raised (and allowed): w h e n in the history of Tibetan Buddhist art was the iconographic subject and the artistic motif of a dancing dākinī represented at its best in the most impressive and inspiring way with regard to the spiritual essence and aesthetic beauty of the image? There can be no doubt that it was during the 14th and 15th century when Nepalese and Tibetan artists produced the most dynamic and elegant statues of these divine sky-wanderers of supernatural power and secret knowledge.

Another eye-catching masterpiece of the artistically high-ranking selection for the Essen and Berlin exhibition is, in stunning comparison with its early miniature-sized Nepalese counterpart no.33, a 78 cm large gilt copper statue of the thousand-armed and eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara lent by the Norbulingka Palace collection in Lhasa and used as the cover illustration of the catalogue (no.34; **fig. 79**). The thou-

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guardians see: von Schroeder 1981, 148S; TheCrucible of Compassion and Wisdom 1987, plate 27; Christie's New York 23.3.1999, no.109; www.himalayanart.com, no.59835; and five statues in the Ramoche in Lhasa.

sand arms - eight main arms and the seventeen concentric rows of in fact (!) 992 individual arms make the symbolically countless hands and the unlimited compassion of this all-embracing saviour of mankind, of the "one-ten-headed" (ekā daśa mukha) bodhisattva, indeed physically visible! This brilliant and unparalleled image represents later Tibetan artisanry of the 18th century at its very best. I do not however recognize "Sino-Tibetan" characteristics as they are suggested in the catalogue. The drapery style of the dhoti and of the scarf laid around the neck takes up a three-hundred years long Tibetan tradition and cannot be associated with contemporary Tibeto-Chinese motives and influences. For those connoisseurs and scholars whose interest in Buddhist art goes beyond the early periods, the Norbulingka Avalokiteshvara represents one of the most exceptional images in Tibetan art history, both in aesthetics and sheer technical craftsmanship.

Among the later thangkas in the exhibition, two examples may be selected here for their artistic quality and documentary value. The exquisite painted scroll of an unidentified Nyingma yogin from the Potala Palace, possibly a manifestation of Guru Rinpoche seated in a superbly drawn scenery with rocky mountains, waterfalls, and blossoming trees, is one of the finest "sacred landscape paintings" to exist in Tibet (no.44). While its exact iconography still requires further research, the style might be associated here with the New Menri tradition (sMan bris gsar ma) of the 17th century painter Chos dbyings rGya mtsho, whose genius artistry has been described in a Tibetan art manual as "a festival delighting gods and men".[106] The specific painting style of the landscape and of the figures can be compared with a thangka of Sakya Pandita in the Newark Museum (USA), which belongs into the same artistic context and may date to the late 17th or to the early 18th century.[107]

A painted scroll depicting Tashi Lhünpo monastery (no.84) belongs to the type of dKar chag thang ka, a visual pilgrim's guide to the foremost holy places inTibet. The three red-coloured buildings with the golden

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[106] D. Jackson, A History of Tibetan Painting, Vienna 1996, p.222.

[107] See Jackson 1996, op.cit., plate 46.

roofs are wrongly identified in the catalogue text. Correct is, from right to left: mausoleum of the First Panchen Lama Chos kyi rGyal mtshan (1570-1662), of the Second Panchen Lama bLo bzang Ye shes (1663-1737), and of the Third Panchen Lama bLo bzang dPal ldan Ye shes (1738-1780). Thus the painting must date to the period of the Fourth Panchen Lama bLo bzang bsTan pa'i Nyi ma (1782-1853), which means sometime before 1853, when the successive later tomb buildings of the Fourth, Fifth (d.1882), Sixth (d.1937) and Seventh Panchen Lama (d.1989) and the tall shrine for the giant Maitreya statue from 1916 did not yet exist in the western section.

The enclosed palace complex on the lower part of the painting appears to be the earliest representation of the former Panchen's summer residence (now ruined), which was replaced by a new residential building for the late Seventh Panchen Lama in the 1950s. The grand Shigatse dzong of the 17th century to the right, once the most impressive governmental fortress in Tibet and completely destroyed during the "Cultural Revolution", has been completely reconstructed (2005-2007).

The five mandalas shown in the exhibition (no. 68, 72, 73, 76, 78) are clearly below the high quality standard of many other objects. Admittedly only very few of the much appreciated earlier Sakya and Ngor style paintings have survived in Tibet (though no longer in ritual use), while by far most of the important pre-16th century mandala thangkas are now in western public and private collections. However at least two exceptional 15th and 16th century Kalacakra mandalas of that tradition are preserved in the Potala Palace and in the Lhasa Tibet Museum **(figs. 127, 128)**. And many fine mandala paintings of the 17th through 19th centuries are kept in the Potala Palace, which were published only recently.[108] The only remarkable painting in the exhibition is an 18th century Kalacakra mandala of the Sakya tradition (Potala Palace, no.76)

[108] See for over 150 mandala thangkas in the Potala Palace: The Celestial Palace of the Gods of Tantric Vajra Yana, ed. by the Tibetan Administrative Office of the Potala, Beijing 2004.

with lovely sceneries depicting the Shambhala kings and the transmission by an (unidentified) Sakya hierarch and his lineage predecessors.

An iconographic rarity with an interesting historical identity and provenance is a thangka illustrating 292 "calendar deities" (with their inscribed names) associated with the different months and days according to the Kalacakra mandala (no.77). Together with a second image of the same subject, this unique cultural treasure is preserved in Shalu monastery, for whose hermitage community Ri phug it was painted around or soon after 1568 and dedicated to the 15th Shalu abbot mKhyen brtse dBang phyung (1524-1568) as we can read in the inscription on the back. What might have been regarded as a curiosity in subject and form and may be overlooked from an art historian's eye-view in terms of artistic quality and aesthetic attractiveness, was luckily realised and selected by the organisers and thoroughfully analysed in the catalogue by Gregor Verhufen. This unusual painting shown and published here for the first time makes an important addition to the iconography and cultural history of the Kalacakra Tantra.

Whether a whole room in the museum displaying six medical thangkas of a 20th century replica set and eight statues of the Medicine Buddha and 29 pages in the catalogue dedicated to Tibetan medicine would necessarily be part of an exhibition with special focus on highranking Tibetan religious art might be disputable. And do over 95% of the catalogue buyers need and read such a detailed monographic study when appropriate books for advanced interest are available?

As a chapter of Tibetan cultural history and of a still existing paramedicinal healing system and practice, it could well be a challenge for exciting exhibition didactics and presentation with a greater variety of related objects and documentation. However medical science has been presented in the Villa Hügel museum as "art" within a predominantly aesthetic context and thus came out quite boring. An hommage à la mode since the medical wonders of the Himalayas are currently held in "alternative" esteem, far away from its socio-religious and spiritual basis and context. The lengthy catalogue text by Petra Maurer does not men-

tion at all (except in a brief end-note on p.618) what should be regarded as a priority question in this exhibition: are there any paintings of the original late 17th century set still preserved? What about the historical identity of these 20th century replicas lent by the Lhasa museum? A few additions and comments may fill the gaps.

The original series of 79 (not "77") thangkas was painted under the supervision of Regent Sangye Gyatso (Sangs rgyas rGya mtsho, 1653-1705) between 1687 and 1703 in order to illustrate the medical teachings according to the standard work of the Four Tantras (rGyud bzhi) and it's commentary, the Blue Beryll (Vaidurya sngon po). 60 paintings of this set were completed in 1688, the year of the publication of the Blue Lapis Lazuli[109], and the other 19 paintings were added in 1703. When in 1916 the new Mentsikhang (sMan rtsis khang) was built, 31 of the original thangkas existed and still do **(fig. 80, 81).** The other 48 missing images were repainted in 1923.

Three complete sets exist in the modern Mentsikhang (including the 31 original paintings), in the Tibet Museum in Lhasa, and in the museum at Ulan Ude (Burjatia). Replica sets are known to have been copied for teaching purposes in 1918 and 1933. This vast number of repaintings – not regarding any eventual further copies – makes the chronological identification of all these thangkas quite difficult. Today altogether 130 medical paintings exist in the Lhasa Mentsikhang and 164 in the Tibet Museum. Very little is known about their practical use. According to some historical Tibetan texts the paintings were shown and explained in the medical school monastery on the lCags po ri every year during the summer vacation period for seven days.[110]

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[109] In his biography of the Sixth Dalai Lama Sangye Gyatso mentions that he made 62 medical thangkas illustrating the Vaidurya sngon po (C.Cüppers, sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's vai Duurya g.ya' sel and the Iconometrical Handbook cha tshad kyi bris dpe dpyod ldan yid gsos. Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Art Studies, Third Intern. Conference on Tibetan Archaeology and Arts, Beijing 2006, Abstracts, p.20).

[110] M. Henss, The Cultural Monuments of Tibet, vol.I, chapter 6.2, forthcoming. For further details on the medical Thangkas F.Meyer, Introduction à l'étude d'une série de peintures médicales crée à Lhasa au 17e siècle, in: Tibet. Civilisation et Société, Paris

37 ritual objects (catalogue entries) were selected in order to illustrate the various other furnishings of a Tibetan temple, all provided with highly informative texts about their respective rituals and textual sources, mainly written by Andreas Kretschmar and Geshe Pema Tsering.

Two offering lamps ("butter lamps", mchod me) are especially interesting for their inscriptions and provenance. No.104 from the Potala Palace, of pure gold and 33 cm in height, was donated by the Regent ad interim Ngag dbang 'Jam dpal bde legs rGya mtsho (1723-1777), better known as Demo Tulku (r.1757-1777), on behalf of the Lhasa government for the tomb stupa of the Seventh Dalai Lama. No.105 from the Norbulingka Palace properties, of silver and 31 cm in height, was presented in 1897 "to the great leader of this (Samsara) world", the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.

An extraordinarily precious item is the 77 cm long khaṭvāṅga iron staff from the Potala Palace, whose general ritual function and meaning has been excellently described by Andreas Kretschmar (no.117: 15th/16th century; **figs. 82a and b, 83**), but its artistic value and historical attribution are not properly discussed. The octagonal shaft with the fine scroll work ornament in damascened technique of gold and silver inlays, which became known in Yuan dynasty China from the Islamic world, recalls several comparable ritual implements in type, style, and technique some ritual implements made at the early Ming court under the Yongle and Xuande emperors, all great masterpieces of Tibetan-Buddhist ritual art objects, a so far hardly researched field, which would deserve a proper documentation.[111] It is the only known Ming period

1990, p.29-58, and F. Meyer in Parfionovitch et al.1992. For the lCags po ri medical school in general: R.Gerl/J.Aschoff, Der Tschagpori in Lhasa. Medizinhochschule und Kloster. Ulm 2005.

[111] For other ritual objects of the early imperial Ming style see R.Thurman/D. Weldon, Sacred Symbols. The Ritual Art of Tibet. New York 1999, nos.62, 63, 64 (with further references) V. Zwalf, Buddhism. Art and Faith. London/New York 1985, p.210, no. 307 (British Museum, with Yongle reign mark); Sotheby's London 10.7.1973, no. 45 (with Yongle reign mark; said to come from Tsurphu monastery); advertisment John Eskenazi

khaṭvāṅga with a complete vajra at the top, while the few other existing objects of a similar style have this emblem split off into an upper and a lower part at both ends of the staff. Although the inlay work of the shaft suggest a Yongle dynasty date the facial features of the heads and certain details of the vase and of the vajra may possibly indicate a later manufacture. The 'Phags pa script on the upper end of the handle, ma pham tshe rtang, cannot be properly translated ("the Khaṭvāṅga of undestructible longevity"?).

An unreadable inscription in 'Phags pa characters may raise the question whether all these "Tibeto-Chinese" ritual objects were solely manufactured at the imperial ateliers in China as generally believed or also produced "on imperial command" and copied in the famous metalwork centers like Derge in eastern Tibet, where, far away from the sophisticated and intellectual court style milieu, such inscriptions might have been occasionally misunderstood.[112] Was the Potala Khaṭvāṅga after all, one of the best and the largest to exist, manufactured in the imperial workshops during the early Ming period? According to an oral tradition at Tsurphu monastery the Fifth Karmapa is said to have received six khaṭvāṅgas from Ming Chengzu at the time of his visit at the court in Nanjing. According to Nik Douglas, the present Karmapa believes that the Khaṭvāṅga (with a Yongle reign mark) in the British Museum is one of this group (I thank for this information John Clarke, London).

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in Arts of Asia, November 1997; Sotheby's London 24.4.1997, no.122; Christie's New York 17.9.1998, no.98; Christie's New York 23.3.1999, no.108; Christie's New York 22.3.2000, no.106; Watt/Leidy 2005, op.cit., plate 27 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; inscribed Yongle nian zhi, "made in the Yongle era"), see here also p.75,77; Hanhai Autumn Auction, The Sublime Grandeur of Yongle Imperial Bronzes, Beijing 2006, p.56-71. For the Khaṭvāṅga in the British Museum see also the chapter by John Clarke in D. La Rocca (Ed.), Warriors of the Himalayas. Rediscovering the Arms and Armor of Tibet. New York 2006, p.27.

[112] Compare Watt/Leidy 2005, op.cit., p.77, with reference to a partially illegible Chinese reign mark inscription on a ritual axe in the Cleveland Museum of Art. Compare, however, for the volute scroll ornament at the upper end of the handle and for the more "modern" looking elements like the skull and the vase similar ritual objects attributed to the Yongle era such as pl.28 and 29 (top).

Recent publications on Tibetan tsha tsha votif clay tablets have documented a wealth of so far unknown material, especially of the early periods, predominantly from Pala India and Kashmirian Western Tibet.[113] The iconographic and stylistic peculiarities of these newly discovered and generally underestimated miniature sculptures still await further research for the history of Buddhist art in Tibet. Many of them were found at Tholing and beyond, the monastic and political center of the early Gu ge Kingdom in the 11th and 12th century. And it is to this "Kashmirian period" and area of Tibet's religious and artistic history that four of the five exhibited tablets of this portable ars multiplicata have to be attributed (nos.109-112: "13th-14th century"). A good number of iconographic types of western and central Tibetan statuary have survived only in these "minor arts". Other questions have remained unanswered so far: how long, for example, were the individual metal molds used for the casting of the clay "prints"? Would 11th century molds still have been served to produce tsha tsha images in the 16th century or later? And consequently how many tablets found and preserved in stupas are in fact much later "editions" of the original cast form, from which such clay prints may have been made? A comprehensive Western language book on this attractive and so richly available material would be overdue indeed!

Less convincing is the selection of eleven mostly secular artefacts within the section "Religious Rulers: Insignia and objects of daily use" (p.427ff.). With the exception of the two golden seals (gser tham) bestowed by the Yongzheng emperor between 1723 and 1735 upon the "All-knowing Vajradhara, the ruler over the highly meritorious Western Spheres, Lord of the entire teachings of the Buddha in this world", the Seventh Dalai Lama (no.85), and by the Kangxi emperor on the Second Panchen Lama bLo bzang Ye shes (in 1713, no.86), these exhibits ap-

[113] See especially Zhongguo Zangchuan Fojiao Diashu, vol.4 (A Collection of Tibetan Buddhist Sculpture. Votif Images in Moulded Clay). Beijing 2001; Xizang Minjian Yishu Congshu Tuomo Nisu (Tibetan Folk Art Series. Sculptures), Chongqing 2001.

pear as a kind of sampler without a proper context. A horse saddle, a single piece of a necklace ga'u, a Korean ceramic bowl brought to Tibet – and described on three full pages in the catalogue –, an inkpot and some writing utensils are rather lost in the exhibition and do not allow some deeper insight into the life and works of the leading hierarchs of Tibet!

The 664 page exhibition catalogue with 438 excellent colour and 17 black-and-white illustrations (by the Chinese photographer Yan Zhongyi) is only available in the clothbound German edition. Text contributions were provided by 25 international scholars – who should have been introduced by a short profile of their scholarly data -, predominantly with regard to the 138 entries (462 pages without endnotes and appendices) written by Andreas Kretschmar, Bernadette Bröskamp, and Gregor Verhufen (Cologne and Bonn Universities) for iconography and rituals, style and art history, and religious history and literature respectively. Many text entries were compiled in a joint venture by two or even three authors, a reasonable concept in order to present a maximum of information and research for each exhibited item. The careful editing was done with much expertise and concern by Andreas and Marit Kretschmar under the editorial management of the leading scientific organisers, Prof. Yeong-hee Lee-Kalisch and her assistant Dr. Juliane Noth, both from Berlin University.

With respect to the scholarly and general reader, a satisfying "middle way" was found for the transliteration, transcription, and phonetic spellings of the Tibetan, Sanskrit, and Chinese names and terms. For the endnotes grouped in 29 sections, one would have prefered a slightly easiergoing arrangement to have access to the references more quickly. The 25 page bibliography with separate sections for Tibetan, Sanskrit, and Chinese historical texts and modern publications offers more than a "selection" only and allows a largely complete or at least very comprehensive survey on literary sources and current research related to the exhibited objects and general essays. Selected relevant bibliographical sources are added to the individual text of each entry (missing for nos.

14, 53, 55, 81). An eight page glossary on Buddhist terms and symbols was professionally compiled for "advanced studies" by Andreas Kretschmar. A "Synchronoptical Survey on Tibetan Buddhism, 500-1940 AD" (K.H.Golzius and G.Verhufen) comprises the whole of Asia instead of concentrating on Tibet, India and China.

The sheer physical weight of the four kilogram book goes much beyond what an exhibition catalogue should primarily be: a portable assistance to the visitor when looking at the original artefacts. Nobody will carry around in the exhibition a 662 page heavy volume, which even at home is a challenge for the "general reader" (98% of all visitors?), when he has to go through over half a dozen of pages in order to check a single object. A pleasure for the specialist, a burden for the great "rest" of those who bought this impressive and substantial exhibition handbook? Are seven pages on a modest Vajravarahi painting (no.58) or eight pages on a Vajrakila "black painting" (no.57) – more than Erberto Lo Bue's excellent and very readable general essay on Tibetan painting was allowed to cover (p.90-95) – appropriate for an exhibition catalogue, which is basically not supposed to be a pure academic publication for a handful of insiders? And would extensive monographic studies with 57 endnotes for an even more specific circle of interested readers make the standard for over 10,000 catalogues buyers such as the most detailed study on the indeed amazing Indian Pala period manuscript no.26? Or 20 pages about the Mahabodhi temple replica and three different types of Tibetan mchod rten, mostly describing the "Stupa in general" instead of the individual type (no.23, p.196-215)?

The detailed and nearly "complete" iconographic surveys on Manjushri (no.31) and on the Eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara (no.33) with scholarly excursions into the field of specific rituals are no doubt admirable and brilliant examples of special insight. But when reading and writing for this review only from a purely academic perspective one would have preferred a "normal" catalogue of maximum circa 350 pages a n d , as a separate second volume comparable to the two-volumes "Die Götter des Himalaya" (The Gods of the Himalayas, published in German only,

Munich 1989) of the former Gerd-Wolfgang Essen collection of Tibetan art (now Basel, Museum der Kulturen), a scholarly reference book in close connection with the "main volume".

Quite a few catalogue texts present very precise and informative iconographic descriptions, but nothing about style or technique: nos.16, 17 (with a full biography of the historical Buddha), and 44, 45, 46, 67, 76, no.43 without a word on the appliqué technique no.52 with a purely general text on Hayagrīva, nos.54, 62, 66, 81, 83 without any specific reference to the exhibited statue, or no.117 without a proper description of the metal technique. Even exhibits of minor importance are documented on three or four pages such as the Hayagriva statuette no.52, the prayer wheel no.91, or the Kalaśa vase no.114. Lengthy paragraphs which are not always a source of great scholarly inspiration or which may well have their place in academic journals like, for example, the middle section of the mahāsiddha text no.41 have "survived" without any critical interference and textual reduction by the "managing editor" of the catalogue. One can well understand the scholarly ambition and temptation of the individual contributor "to write as much and detailed as possible", however less the "supreme editorial board", where at a certain point one may have lost control over the extensively growing printed matter.

This generosity towards the authors of the catalogue texts proved some disadvantage to those, who had delivered, mostly later on, the general essays (100 pages of totally 664). Several of them were even shortened, partly in a considerably disproportional way.

In view of the mostly extensive descriptions of each entry, the short "summary" printed in bold type at the beginning is very helpful for a quick overview.

In association with the many thoroughly researched texts on the exhibited artefacts, the iconographical identifications and art historical attributions are largely very informative and correct. So are the datings of each object, to which only a few suggestions may be added here. The gilt copper Guhyasamāja-Akṣobhyavajra no.56, "18th century", must be

dated on quite evident stylistic grounds to the late 15th or early 16th century (lotus petal design, garment style, jewelry forms). The Yama no.66, "ca.16th century", is a characteristic Tibeto-Chinese metal image of the second half of the 15th century (design of the double lotus and jewelry). The copper statue of a Tibetan dharma king no.80, "11th-12th century", was cast like the similar figure of King Songtsen Gampo (no.81) in the 14th century (see text above), and the votif clay tablets (tsha tsha) from western Tibet nos.109-112, "13th-14th century", represent in fact the early Kashmir style of that area during the 11th or 12th century.

Twelve introductory essays comprise the following subjects: Fundamentals of Buddhism (A. Kretschmar and Te'u Chen Dragpa, Köln), Drepung – a monastic institution (G. Dreyfus, Williamstown, USA), The Potala – palace and monastery (Paphen, Lhasa), Pilgrimage in Tibet (T. Huber, Berlin), Tibetans on the Silk Road (M. Yaldiz, Berlin), Sacred Scriptures in Tibet (Sonam Wangden, Lhasa), Tantric Rituals – an introduction (U. Bräutigam, Düsseldorf), Mandala – form, function and meaning (C. Luczianits, Wien), Foreign Styles in Tibetan Sculpture (A. Heller, Nyon), Tibetan Painting (E. Lo Bue, Bologna), Tibetan Buddhist Art – donors, sponsors, artisans (H. Stoddard, Paris), Iconometry in Tibetan Buddhist Art (M. Henss, Zürich).

In association with the principal artefacts shown in the Villa Hügel exhibition, thangkas and statues – usually the most popular and attractive objects in Tibetan art – the masterful general survey on Tibetan Buddhist painting by Erberto LoBue is especially noteworthy: not written with the ambition to deliver some "latest research" for an academic paper, but as an introduction for the general reader and as a concise overview for the specialist (p.90-95).

Amy Heller's very informative "cultural history" of Buddhist sculpture in Tibet is based on rich material, latest studies, and helpful references to the exhibited objects (p.80-89). In correspondence to the historical geography the earliest inspirations for Tibetan statuary of the 7th through 9th centuries came quite naturally from Central Asia and Nepal.

Silverware like the famous "wine jug" of Songtsen Gampo in the Lhasa Jokhang or a partly gilded cup in the Cleveland Museum of Art and a bowl with a rich ornamented decoration **(figs. 84, 85)** follows so closely foreign designs and figural styles that their origin is still under dispute: made in Tibet after probably Sogdian models or brought from the northern Silk Routes to Tibet?

As we know since Roberto Vitali's publication of the life-size bodhisattvas at Keru Lhakhang to the East of Samye in his "Early Temples in Central Tibet" (1990), these earliest monumental clay statues to have survived in Tibet recall several stylistic elements which can be associated with contemporary images and ornaments at Dunhuang or with the largely lost treasures of Khotan. Was the style of Kashmir ever a "foreign" style in Tibetan sculpture? Obviously this distinctive artistic language had no formative influence on the sculpture and painting in the Central Regions, whereas in western Tibet it represented the indigenous art tradition of "Greater Kashmir" between Srinagar, Gilgit and Tholing, of which a regional "dialect" of its own developed in the course of the 11th and 12th century by local Tibetan ateliers next to artists from Kashmir working now in the easternmost territories (and beyond) of their former cultural realm. Thus one may characterise the earliest figural arts of western Tibet as derivatives of the great centuries-old Kashmirian tradition, which remained the basic aesthetic convention in the whole western Himalayas until the 13th century.[114] The art of Kashmir was basically not a foreign style in the West of "Greater Tibet" but can be seen from an overall view as part of a cultural and artistic entity in space and time.

Nepalese art and artists in early central Tibet are well documented since the 7th and 8th century (Lhasa Jokhang, Samye, etc.). I am, however, re-

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[114] See for the whole problem of Kashmir and western Tibetan statuary M.Henss, Buddhist Metal Images of Western Tibet, ca.1000-1500 A.D.: Historical Evidence, Stylistic Consideration and Modern Myths. The Tibet Journal, vol.XXVII, no.3/4, 2002, p.23-82.

luctant to see as Amy Heller does similar influences at this period in eastern Tibet. The figural style of the Denma Drag rock carvings (dated 816) is in my understanding clearly related to contemporary "Tibeto-Central Asian" images in the Buddhist grottoes along the Silk Road in the northern Chinese-Tibetan borderlands such as Dunhuang (Cave 14) or Yulin. Refering to the Nepal-Tibet connection Heller (p.87) claims that gilt copper images of the western Nepalese Khasa-Malla kingdom would have been sent to Drigung monastery and to the Lhasa Jokhang during the later 13th and in the 14th century. Although this cannot be ruled out, it does not, however, make much sense for three reasons. Firstly, the text "source" quoted by Heller (Blue Annals, p.580, 583f., 607) mentions only some "golden roofs of caityas" apparently donated by the king of Ya tshe and simply "numerous offerings", but no images. Secondly, the period concerned would be considerably earlier than those Nepalese statues, which in style and quality may represent a 14th century "Khasa Malla" artistic profile, attractive for "export" to Tibet. And finally there were many more and much better 13th and 14th century metal images to be given to Tibet, which were either produced in the Kathmandu Valley and sent to Tibetan commissioners or manufactured by Newari artists in Tibet for Tibetan patrons.

When ancient texts like the dBa' bzed chronicle describe the art and architecture of Samye monastery (late 8th century) as made in the Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan style, "Indian" refers in fact to Nepal in its analogous interpretation of Indian Pala art, "Chinese" to the northern Silk Road regions, while "Tibetan" seems to stand more for an ideal construct than for an art historical reality.

Amy Heller possibly overestimates Atisha's role for the transfer of Indian and Nepalese art to western Tibet, which are at those times on their "natural" northbound ways much more influential in southern and central Tibet. She refers to the great Newari specialities such as the elaborate gilt-copper repoussé prabhāmaṅḍndalas, the throneback of an image, which at the early phyi dar period foundations like Shalu, Yemar

or Kyangbu were combined with Central Asian elements to a rather eclectic and syncretistic stylistic profile.

To illustrate the Kashmiri and Nepalese connection of Tibetan art Heller includes an exceptional smaller version in silver and gilt brass with copper inlays of the famous "Three Silver Brothers" (dngul sku mched gsum, catalogue ill.p.87), a monumental group of the three bodhisattvas Avalokiteshvara (center), Manjushri, and Vajrapani at Khojarnath monastery close to the border of western Nepal, which she had published previously and convincingly attributed on historical and stylistic grounds to the local Purang or Guge milieu of the early 13th century.[115] This hitherto unknown masterpiece combines in a unique way – and confirmed by the ancient texts - the late art of Kashmir (figural style; compare the wall-paintings in the Sumtseg temple at Alchi) with contemporary Nepalese traditions (throne and torana), two "foreign" styles – as seen from a central Tibetan perspective – which were at that time in the Guge-Purang and Nepal borderlands not foreign at all.

Considering the Nepalo-Tibetan issue, Amy Heller comes once more to the much discussed Fournier-Mahākāla of the Musée Guimet (p.86, ill. on p.102) dated by its inscription to 1292 (or 1293?) **(fig. 86).** Since the Tibetan donor A tsar Bag shi had served in 'Phags pa's entourage at

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[115] Bibliographical reference missing in the catalogue: A.Heller, The Three Silver Brothers. Orientations, April 2003, p.28-34. Heller's date of "c. 1220", which one would rather prefer as "sometime after 1220", is only based on a legendary tradition as recorded by R.Vitali (The Kingdoms of Gu-ge Pu-trang. Dharamsala 1996, p.401-403 associated with king gNam mgon lde, who had become ruler of Purang in 1220. Kha char (Newari: Khojarnath) was not the "capital" of sPu hrangs (which was sTag la mkhar, nowadays Taklakot or Purang), but the principal sacred site nearby. The sculpture group in the Pritzker collection (Chicago) with an inscription by its donor gNam mkha' grags can be regarded as a smaller replica (height: 71,4 cm) of the circa contemporary "Three Silver Brothers" at Khojarnath, of which the principal statue, the "Great Silver Image", was erected soon after the foundation of this monastery by Rinchen Zangpo in 996 and since then has been highly revered as one of the Three Jowo (Jo bo) of Tibet, next to the Jokhang Jowo Shakyamuni in Lhasa and the Kyirong Jowo. The present three statues at Khojarnath have survived the centuries and the devastations of the "Cultural Revolution" only in a very fragmentary condition.

the Mongol court (but very likely returned to Sakya after the state religious preceptor's death in 1280), it was believed by some scholars that this 47 cm large stone stele might have been manufactured in the imperial ateliers at Dadu (Beijing), which were supervised by the famous Newari master-artist Anige (A ni ko, 1245-1306). There are, however, no real arguments in favour of a production in Yuan China. Thus Sakya, whose many ancient – and preserved! – art treasures are largely unknown and unresearched until these days, was - in agreement with Amy Heller - with much probability the place where this Mahākāla of the Tent and very likely also comparable miniature stelae (cat.no.64, and **fig. 87**) were carved in the second half of the 13th century. This seems to be supported even by the inscription, as it was already noted by Heather Stoddard in 1985. While the distinctive Newari style of this statue is also emphasized by Heller, the association with the "Anige style"[116] can be only understood in the broader sense of the various Nepalo-Tibetan dialects as they exist – next to pure Newari and "Nepalo-Chinese" styles – in the wall-paintings at Shalu of the late 13th and early 14th century, which reflect quite vaguely the profile of what could have been the Anige style at the Mongol Yuan court alike.

How closely Nepalese and Tibetan styles were integrated into each other is shown in all kind of grades by countless sculptures and paintings in the 14th century. The luxuriant gilt copper statuary of the former stupa decorations at Densa Thil (ill. 11 on p.87) represents the Newar-dominated sculptural style in Tibet between circa 1350 and 1450 in the

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[116] See M. Henss, Is there any "Anige Style" in Nepalo-Tibetan and Tibeto-Chinese Metal Sculpture of the Sa skya-Yuan Period? Third International Conference on Tibetan Archaeology and Art, Beijing 2006, Abstracts, p.77-83, and in: Palace Museum Journal, no.5, 2007, Beijing, p.51-66 (in Chinese) – I cannot recognize a dragon (Heller) on the lower part of the stele, however a serpent instead, which may refer to the year 1293. According to H.Stoddard's translation of the inscription the "statue was completed well in the year of the male water dragon (1292)", cf. A Stone Sculpture of mGur mGon po, Mahākāla of the Tent, dated 1292. Oriental Art, 1985, no.3, p.278-282.

most extensive way. I cannot see, however, a "Nepalese taste" for a silver image of a lama (dated 1476, ill.13 on.p.88). And overestimated by Heller is also the influence of Pala style models for the Tibeto-Chinese lotus mandalas (no.75), which certainly can be regarded as more creative compositions than just as a "nearly perfect copy of the (Indian) original" (Heller, p.88). To characterise these most sophisticated metalworks as "replicas" (which would be more correct for many Tibeto-Chinese metal images of the 18th century) can be disproved by a proper comparison with the Indian prototypes.

Georg D r e y f u s' contribution on Drepung (founded in 1416, not 1418) gives an exemplary insight to the history and system of Tibetan monastic institutions now and then and thus provides valuable background information for the understanding of the actual origin and function as well as for the iconological and ritual context of Tibetan art (p.25-33).

In a similar way helpful for the reading of Buddhist images and symbols is Uwe B r ä u t i g a m's introduction into some basic structures of the rituals in tantric Buddhism, a most essential but rather rarely treated subject in books on Tibetan art! (p.62-70)

The well organised essay on the mandalas shown in the exhibition by Christian L u c z i a n i t s allows deep and broad understanding in order to analyze and visualize a mandala, both for general a n d for more advanced interest. Much has been written on this principal meditational image and ritual object and one may argue that when doing a nine page survey one has only the choice to decide either for a general and eventually rather "popular" compilation of well-known characteristics and interpretations, or for a specific problem such as an iconographic or art historical aspect of a so far unresearched individual mandala. Instead the author succeeded in covering by his condensed overview the full range of mandala essentials with some new approach and insight: etymology and definition, composition and geometry, iconography and ritual, form and function, consecration and textual sources, exemplified by some

Highest Yoga Tantras, the mandalas of Vajradhātu, Cakrasamvara, Vajrayogini, and Vajrabhairava (p.71-79).[117]

It is common knowledge that in Tibet the written word of the Buddha is held in higher esteem than a Buddhist image. Sacred scriptures are today the most hidden and unexplored treasures in Tibetan monasteries and archives (see above in this review for catalogue no.26). Conservation and investigation of manuscripts and printed books may no doubt lead to further exciting discoveries and will be hopefully among the priorities of the current and future efforts to preserve and document Tibet's cultural heritage. Accordingly is the contribution to the history and different categories of Buddhist books and textual traditions in Tibet by Sonam W a n g d e n , Vice-director of the Tibet-Museum in Lhasa, not only a must within the context of the exhibition, but also most welcome to encourage future attention, care, and research in Tibet and abroad (p.54-61).

In this sense a few additional remarks to Sonam Wangden's text and illustrations may prove to be helpful. Although my own knowledge in this field is very limited, I do have some doubts about the early dating of several reproduced manuscripts such as fig. 2, 5 and 6. The sutra page of fig. 2 from Tholing monastery can certainly not be dated to the "Yarlung period", however in comparison with similar illuminated manuscript pages from this area to the 11th or 12th century. To identify a Prajñāpāramitā text page in dBu med characters as the personal handwriting of King Trisong Detsen (r.755-797) recalls some other very courageously dated scriptures in the Lhasa museum.[118] Another important

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[117] Though being of minor importance within this context Luczianits' (too) early dating of the mandala wall-painting at Nako monastery in Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh, India (essay, fig.4), to the "early 12th century" would not correspond in my opinion to the Western Tibetan painting styles and to the chronology of the mandalas at Phiyang (Gu ge, ca.1100?) and Alchi (early 13th century).

[118] Compare Precious Deposits 2000, op.cit., vol.I, nos.72, 87, 88, 100, 103. Other problematic attribution to the sPu rgyal dynasty period as mentioned by Sonam Wangden would comprise a text collection on the Potala Palace written by Santaraksita and some Kanjur and Tanjur texts written in gold script on indigo-blue paper.

treasure in the Tibet Museum attributed to the "Yarlung period", a Sanskrit text collection written in Śāradā script on birch-bark (shing stag pa'i shun pags) and bound as a Western style book (15,6x15,3cm; ill.5 on p.59), was identified only recently by the Japanese scholar Kazuhiro Kawasaki as having been copied in Kashmir during the reign of King Anantadeva (r.1028-1063) and dated according to the colophon to 1059. Its 27 tantric Buddhist texts are dedicated to rituals and commentaries, especially of the Jñānapāda school, one of the two major traditions for the interpretation of the Guhyasamāja tantra **(fig. 88).**[119]

Another Tibetan expert from Lhasa, Mr. P a p h e n of the Potala administration, was invited to present his experience and ideas – so to speak on his own behalf – about the Potala Palace. It is very much appreciated that local scholars contribute to such a high-ranking exhibition abroad, even when their opinions do not always correspond to other research in the field. Paphen's claim that King Songtsen Gampo had built on top of the dMar po ri a monumental royal palace (sKu mkhar pho brang) with "thousand rooms and three enclosure walls" takes up a well-known and longstanding legendary tradition, which has become "history" and thus was accepted as fact even in scholarly publications.[120] Al-

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[119] Kazuhiro Kawasaki, On a Birch-bark Sanskrit Manuscript Preserved in the Tibet Museum. Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies, vol.52, no.2, 2004, p.903-905. I thank Dr. Helmut Eimer for having made this publication available. Another very similar Sanskrit manuscript written on individual birch-bark pages of the "Indo-Tibetan" palm-leaf type found at Tholing monastery in Western Tibet confirms for sheer historical reasons an 11th century date of the Sanskrit book in Lhasa. – A brief comment to note 7 on p.586: the monastery "Drongkhar Chöde" on p.57 of Sonam Wangden's text is not identical with "Gongkar Chöde" (near Lhasa airport), but located in Lhodrag, northwest of Tsona (Tsome).

[120] See for example Mi nyag Chos kyi rGyal mtshan: Srong btsan sgam po'i dus kyi pho brang po ta la'i bzo dbyibs dang chags tshul skor rob tsam dpyad pa (A Fundamental Research on the Potala Palace's structure during the period of King Songtsen Gampo). Paper presented at the Seventh IATS Seminar, Bloomington/USA 1998 (unpublished). This author's arguments are based on the bKa' chems ka khol ma, the famous gter ma text attributed to King Songtsen Gampo and which he regards as authentic. Chos kyi rGyal mtshan follows largely the hypothesis of the early building history of the Potala Palace raised in the course of the extensive restorations in 1989-1994 and published in:

though new claims were made in the years following the comprehensive building renovation of 1989-1994, theories of several extensive tower constructions on the dMar po ri hill during the early sPu rgyal period must remain speculative and without definitive archaeological evidence. And even if it cannot be completely ruled out that some minor fortified building structures (rtse mkhar) did exist on the summit of the Red Hill next to an early image shrine for the Arya Avalokiteshvara in the 7th and 8th century, the hypothesis of a major "Proto-Potala Palace" must be regarded as a myth. This includes also some recently discovered wall-paintings in the well-known Meditation Cave of the Religious King (Chos rgyal sGru phug), for which a "seventh century" date was already forwarded by the restoration team in the 1990s despite their much later style.[121] Like the famous royal statues in the same sanctuary these murals, now again completely covered by later furnishings, were executed in a slightly archaistic style when this chapel was reconstructed as an artificial cave of Avalokiteshvara's sacred abode on Mount Potalaka in 1645.

To write about "Tibetans on the Silk Route" from a Central Asian perspective is apparently more difficult than from a Lhasa eye-view and experience. And this first of all for pure reasons of chronology and cultural transfer as seen – or unseen – in the contribution by Marianne Yaldiz, former director of the Museum of Indian Art in Berlin and a wellknown specialist on Silk Road art (p.48-53). With the above title as

Xizang Budala Gong (The Potala Palace of Tibet). Ed.: Potala Restoration Office. 2 vols. Beijing 1996. For a critical discussion of the early history and architecture of the Potala Palace see M.Henss, The Cultural Monuments of Tibet, vol.I, chapter 5.1, forthcoming. – Several (17th century?) cavity-substructures, between one and five metres in width and up to 14 metres deep, were discovered at the Potala in the late 1990s and regarded by Paphen as belonging to the Songtsen Gampo period (p.38).

[121] See Xizang Budala Gong 1996, op.cit.,p.47, plate 253. For the problem of the earliest building structures and image cycles on the Potala, especially for the Chos rgyal sGrub phug chapel, see also Henss (King Srong btsan sGam po) 2004, op.cit., p.145-149.

guideline one would have expected a survey on the Tibetan influences in the Buddhist centers from Khotan to Karakhoto from the 8th to the 14th century, and prefered a more systematic overview of the cross-cultural connections between Tibet and these international trade and pilgrimage routes. Why not "Tibet and Central Asia" and presenting a greater variety of the artistic interrelations in the sense of "from Tibet to Dunhuang and back"?

Several details of the catalogue text should be reconsidered. By including Kashmir into the "Greater Silk Road" areas the author claims that a "greater number of sculptures were made in Kashmir for Tibetan monasteries", a statement, for which no evidence at all exists in view of central Tibet and, with a few exceptions, also for most of western Tibet. While early Kashmir style images like no.13 may have been brought by the Tibetans during their military missions to the far West back to the Central Regions as tribute or booty (at a time when major monasteries had not yet been established), statues of later periods were usually produced by Kashmir artists or in Western Tibet under the guidance of their new patrons and sponsors.

Instead of presenting specific sites and works of art in order to illustrate the various contacts between the Tibetans and the Silk Road, Yaldiz considers an earlier speculative hypothesis (by Kira Samosyuk) of Tibetan artists working in the Turfan area and beyond during the 11th and 12th century by comparing some painted haloes of a "radiating" design at Shalu monastery (14th century) with the 500 years earlier Bezeklik murals, but finally has to accept that it is the other way round. Influences from Central Asia can be recognized, for example, in early Tibetan metalware or in Tibetan temples such as the Jokhang, and Keru Lhakhang, or at Yemar and Drathang. These cultural relics alone or the excavations at Dulan in Northern Tibet (see Amy Heller's essay, p.80ff.) as well as the Tibetan style murals at Dunhuang or the Tibetan silk banners from the same place – the only traces of Tibetan art besides the later painting tradition in the Tangut Xi Xia Kingdom – would provide some concrete material to document and illustrate a chapter on "Tibet

and the Silk Road". The central image of the Buddha at Keru Lhakhang (not "Kwachu" as misunderstood already by Roberto Vitali; p.51) can hardly be characterized as "Khotanese" since the present statue dates, unlike the 8th century bodhisattva statues in the same shrine, only to the 15th century. The five illustrations, well-known from many Silk Road publications, do not refer to any specific "Tibetan connection" in Central Asia or Central Asian traces in Tibet.

Heather S t o d d a r d gives in her essay on "The Artists and their Patrons in Tibet" (p.96-104) much insight into a rather rarely treated subject, presented here within a broad range of Tibetan cultural history from the 7th to the 19th century. Donating and commissioning, producing and consecrating, worshipping and restoring Buddhist temples and images raises various questions of Tibet's "social history of art and religion". Which has been the role of the donors and patrons, of lamas and laymen, of the artists and their sponsors, of the monasteries and of the sangha? And how can their interactions be described? What are the motivations to have a statue made or a shrine built? It is the wish to accumulate religious merit and good karma, to insure a positive rebirth, to overcome physical and mental obstacles, to gain health and prosperity, to avoid negative thinking, to honour a lama or a distinctive person, or – under specific historical circumstances – to sanctify a wordly sovereign as a divine ruler and sacred king?

All these personal, socio-religious, ritual, economical, and political aspects are literally the vast background of Tibetan-Buddhist art and include probably more than in any other religious culture a considerable potential of psychotherapeutic functions and effects. Tibetan texts may offer a great deal of source material in this field, to which more proper attention should be given. Heather Stoddard quotes one of them in some details about donations and offerings, rituals, and restorations recorded by the Nyingma yogin Shabkar Tsogdrug Rangdröl (Zhabs dkar Tshogs drug Rang grol, 1781-1851) at Ding ri rdzong in southern Tibet. For many other monuments and cultural relics these interactions and interrelations between donor and artist, believer and benefactor, or priest

and patron (mchod yon) are still unknown. And even the scholarly author surprisingly takes legend for history when it comes to the palladium of Tibet, the Jo bo Shakyamuni in the Lhasa Jo khang: "in fact an image, which came by sea from India [to China] and was brought as part of Wencheng's dowry" (p.99). And reading this stimulating contribution one may suggest some further studies in Tibetan texts on "the artist and his theological adviser in iconography and ritual".

There are basically similar motives for donating a Buddhist image and for making "Pilgrimages in Tibet", a subject discussed by Toni Huber, Professor for Tibetan studies at Humboldt University, Berlin (p.41-47): to achieve religious merit by visiting holy places and sacred spaces such as mountains and hermitages of gods and saints, participating in religious ceremonies, worshipping a specific image of mythical or historical importance, or meeting an enlightened master (or his mortal remains and ritual objects) to get his blessings. Thus the pilgrim experiences by this popular practice, as Toni Huber says, the divine presence and vital energy of the sacred site or holy person, chinlab (byin rlabs), which transforms body and mind. Tibetans would use two principal terms for doing pilgrimage, whose practical and linguistic forms are based on Indian traditions: nekhor (gnas 'khor, Sanskr. pradakṣiṇa), "to circumambulate [around a sacred place or image]", and nejal (gnas mjal, Sanskr. dārśana), "to meet" (encounter or see) the sacred.

My own contribution "Iconometry in Tibetan Buddhist Art" (p.105-113) is supposed to give an introduction to some basic theoretical concepts and practical techniques of Tibetan art by describing and interpreting the metaphysical and aesthetic guidelines of the art "how to make an image of the Buddha". Iconometry (chag tshad) can be regarded as the central grammar of Tibetan art in order to establish the perfect form as a standard for the perfectness of mind and for the representation of the perfect Buddha nature. Respecting measures and proportions as the "Characteristic Features of an Image", Pratimāmaṇa laksaṇanāma, the title of an early iconometric Indian text, is to generate visual dharma.

Only then can the sacred painting or statue be ritually alive and effective.

Other Indian sources are the famous Citralakṣaṇa, also a non-Buddhist "Treatise of the Characteristics and Origins of the Figural Arts", and two Buddhist texts such as the Daśatāla nyagrodha parimaṇḍala buddhapratimā lakṣaṇa nāma and the Sambuddha bhāṣita pratimā lakṣaṇa vivaraṇa nāma, which had been already part of the early Sanskrit Mahāyāna tantras before they were translated into Tibetan (the only versions to exist) during the 12th and 13th century.

What do we know about the translator of the Tibetan text? In his extensive commentary to the Chinese edition of the "Buddhist Canon of Iconometry" (Zhaoxiang liangdu jing, 1742), as the Tibetan translation of the short Pratimā lakṣaṇa iconometric sutra was called in a "simplified" version of the Tanjur, the eminent Mongolian scholar and translator Gömpojab (mGon po skyabs, Chin. Gongbu chabu, ca. 1669-1750) mentions that the original Tibetan text was compiled from the Sanskrit "by the monk of the Western Paradise, Dharmadara, and by Dragpa Gyaltsen (Grags pa rGyal mtshan) from Yarlung, and translated in Gungthang township".[122] How can these two translators from the Sanskrit into Tibetan be identified?

While the Indian master Dharmadara is otherwise only known by a translated treatise on physiognomy in the Tanjur, the Tibetan Dragpa Gyaltsen may by associated with three different persons of this name, who were active around 1200, 1300, and 1400 respectively: either with the famous Sakya hierarch rJe btsun Grags pa rGyal mtshan (1147-1216, see no.9 of the catalogue) or with Yar klungs lo tsa ba Grags pa rGyal mtshan of the late 13th to the first half of the 14th century as mentioned in George N.Roerich's English edition of the Deb ther sngon po (Blue Annals, p.281), or with the Bodongpa abbot Grags pa rGyal mtshan

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[122] Gömpojab: Zaoxiang liangdu jing. The Buddhist Canon of Iconometry. With Supplement. A Tibetan-Chinese Translation from about 1742 by mGon po skyabs. Translated and annotated from this Chinese translation into modern English by Cai Jingfeng. Introduction and editing assistance by Michael Henss, Ulm 2000, p.13ff., 84.

(1352-1405). While the former was suggested without relevant textual sources (Amy Heller, personal communication), there are literary references to identify the second or the third person with the translator of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon.

Though having given priority in my essay to Bodong Dragpa Gyaltsen, I may have to reconsider my earlier suggestion that our translator is the Yar klungs lo tsa ba of the Blue Annals and thus was active at around 1300 or during the first half of the 14th century[123]. This would be all the more supported by some other iconometric texts such as the Pratimā maṇa lakṣaṇa and the Sambuddha bhāsita pratimā lakṣaṇa vivaraṇa nāma, which were translated by the same Dragpa Gyaltsen and Dharmadara and recorded in Butön's (Bu ston, 1290-1364) Tanjur catalogue.

Bu tön's own treatise on the proportions and construction of the Enlightenment Stupa, Byang chub chen po'i mchod rten gyi tshad bzhugs so (Coll. Works, vol. Pha, 14, Delhi 1969, p.554-558), which had been translated into Chinese during his lifetime, was studied only recently by Shen Weirong. Another iconometric manual composed by Butön, which was of great influence a hundred years later on the eminent painter Menla Döndrub (sMan bla don grub), is only recorded in the autobiography of the 18th century scholar-artist Tsültrim Rinchen (Tshul khrims Rin chen, 1697-1774) from eastern Tibet, but has not yet been identified so far.[124]

Further iconometric texts are known for example by the Eighth and Tenth Karmapa (1507-1554, 1604-1674), Pema Karpo (Padma dKar po, 1526-1592), and by the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682), which are, how-

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[123] See n.67, and in the book under review, p.106 and n.16 on p.589. For this identity of the "second" Grags pa rGyal mtshan see also P.Sorensen, 2007, op.cit., vol.II, appendix I, n.11.

[124] See Shen Weirong: Studies on the Yuan translation of Bu ston's Proportional Manual of the Enlightenment Stupa, in: Studies in Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Art. Proceedings of the Second International Conference onTibetan Archaeology and Art, Beijing, September 3-6, 2004, Beijing 2006, p.77-108 (Chinese text with Bu ston's text in romanized transliteration); Jackson 1996, p.76 and n.167.

ever, more written in the style of theoretical treatises on symbolic numerology – based on Indian sources and on the Tantras – than as practical manuals for the artist. A detailed discourse on the proportions in painting and sculpture, the Cha tshad kyi bris dpe dpyod ldan yid gos, was edited by Regent Sangye Gyatso (Sang rgyas rGya mtsho, 1653-1705) when at the time in 1687/1688, this erudite author had completed the Vaidurya g.Ya'sel, a commentary on the traditional sciences as they are described in his "White Lapislazuli" (Vaidurya dkar po, 1685).

This so far largely unknown iconometrical handbook mentioned in the sDe srid's biography of the Sixth Dalai Lama is now preserved in the Archives of the TAR in Lhasa. It has been studied in full detail by Christoph C ü p p e r s , who presented his research recently at the Eleventh IATS Seminar 2006 and at the Third International Conference on Tibetan Archaeology and Art in Beijing in October 2006.[125] According to the painter Lha sa dGe bsnyen, one of the artists to execute the murals in the Potala Red Palace during the following years, it had become difficult to consult the old iconometric manuals, whose proportional drawings were often incorrect or not complete, and therefore he proposed to produce a new handbook with the correct measurements.

This dPyod ldan yid gsos (short title), which was based on the iconometric concepts established by the famous sMan bla Don grub (Yid bzhin gyi nor bu) and by nGa la gzigs (his treatise on stupas mChod rten gyi thig rtsa), consists of 137 square-sized pages of polished canvas sheets (ca. 40x40 cm, ca. 82x42 cm when unfolded). For the illustrations – probably the earliest iconometric drawings to exist – Sangye Gyatso employed the three master-artists Nor bu rGya mtsho from Lho brag, 'Jam dbyangs dbang po from Gyantse, and Sangs rgyas Chos grags from Ngam ring. In his study, which will be published as a facsimile edition

[125] C. Cüppers: sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's Vaidurya g.ya' sel and the iconometrical handbook "cha tshad kyi bris dpe dpyod ldan yid gsos". For a more detailed English abstract of this paper see: Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Art Studies. Third International Conference onTibetan Archaeology and Art, Beijing 2006, Abstracts, p.19-23.

book with an English and Chinese introduction (and hopefully a Tibetan as well!), Cüppers gives an annotated survey on the section on language and on the proportions of different scripts in the Vaidurya g.Ya' sel (chapter 202).

Coming back to Gömpojab's Chinese translation of the Iconometric Canon and its extensive commentary, this influential text and especially the illustrations must have been composed in close cooperation with the Second lCang skya Hu thug tu Rol pa'i rDo rje (1717-1786), who made a "very detailed revision and proofreading" as stated in his interesting preface.[126]

It seems that this foremost Buddhist tutor and chief art consultant of the Chinese emperor was also the mastermind behind the iconometric drawings in Gömpojab's Buddhist Canon, which, at least in the case of some of them, can be traced back to the 756 blockprinted illustrations in the Mongol Kangxi-Kanjur from 1718/1720.[127]

A rare iconometric thangka of the thousand-armed Avalokiteshvara in the Tibet Museum, Lhasa, discussed in my text **(fig. 89**; see exhibition catalogue p.110, reproduced on p.91) but not shown in the exhibition, was no doubt painted as an instructional guideline for the artists.Little is known in Tibetan art history about the actual technical procedures from the iconometric drawing until the completion of a painted and – even less – of a three-dimensional image. An original and so to say "historical" iconometric grid (thig khang) of a Buddha head has been preserved

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[126] See Gömpojab 2000, op.cit., p.35f. For another English translation compare P.Berger, Empire of Emptiness. Buddhist Art and Political Authority in Qing China. Honolulu 2003, p.84ff.

[127] Compare Gömpojab 2000, op.cit., ill.p.61, and L.Chandra, Buddhist Iconography of Tibet, Kyoto 1986, vol.I, fig.90, p.20ff. See also Berger 2003, op.cit., p.87-89, claiming that according to the original 18th century text edition the illustrations of the Zaoxiang liangdu jing were "provided as patterns by Rolpay Dorje" (although this reference remains a bit unclear). – On Rolpai Dorje's role in Buddhist art at the Qing court see M.Henss, Rölpai Dorje – teacher of the Empire. A Profile of the Life and Works of the Second Changkya Huthugtu, 1717-1786, in: Chinese Imperial Patronage. Treasures from Temples and Palaces, vol.II, Asian Art Gallery, London 2005, p.97-109.

with a giant silk brocade gos sku thangka at Gyantse monastery dating to 1436-1438 (fig.8 on p.113).[128]

The Lhasa thangka, which is inscribed as "a model for the [lines of] proportions of a Sambhogakāya Buddha" (Sangs rgyas dang longs sku'i cha tshad kyi thig ris) illustrates precisely – though deviating in the measurements – a text on the representation of a bodhisattva added by Gömpojab to his Buddhist Canon Zaoxiang liangdu jing.[129]

The red iconometric grid divides the bodhisattva vertically into 178 Small Units or sor (also sor mo, Sankrit āngula or finger width, of which 112 refer to the proper figure from the top of the principal head (12 units, zhal tshad) to the feet, while 48 Small Units correspond to the successive heads, decreasing from ten to eight, six, and four sor, and including – rather unusual from a "Western" perspective – the diadem and uppermost section of the central face. The other 18 Small Units (6 plus 12) are the measurements for the plinth and lotus throne. Seen in the horizontal dimension the radiant one-thousand-armed Avalokiteshvara comprises a hundred Small Units, fifty on each side of the central axis, all divided in Gömpojab's Canon into an inner circle of dharmakāya consisting of the eight main arms, an intermediate circle of sambhogakāya comprising 40 arms, and into an outer section of the second to sixth circles corresponding to nirmaṇakāya with totally 952 arms.

The last section of my text on comparative iconometry in Chinese, Japanese, ancient Egyptian, Byzantine, and European Renaissance art has been omitted because of "general space problems". A serious issue indeed for a 662 pages exhibition catalogue with many lengthy monographic studies on the exhibited objects, in which two or three addi-

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[128] See M.Henss, Liberation from the Pain of Evil Destinies. The Silken Images (gos sku) of Gyantse Monastery. Proceedings of the Tenth IATS Seminar, Oxford 2003, edited by E.Lo Bue, Leiden 2008, and for the methods and techniques of Tibetan painting in general D.P. and J.A.Jackson, Tibetan Thangka Painting. Methods and Materials. London 1984.

[129] Cf. Gömpojab 2000, p.87f., and Pott 1963, p.199-202.

tional pages on other Eastern and on different Western iconometric concepts – and thus coming back to our own roots and notions – may have served better to the understanding – primarily for the great majority of the Western readers – of these rather complex and complicated artistic theories and practices.

From cult object to art, from temple to museum. This is the usual way of a religious image or artefact now ”exhibited” for secular interest and separated from its former ritual environment. The museum cannot be a copy of an authentic sacred space and context; instead it reflects our own contemporary aesthetic and intellectual perceptions of a foreign culture. It may well create to a certain degree a monastic ambience and atmosphere, however it won't reproduce "Tibet live" as expected and suggested by some visitors.

Thus any critique with regard to the life-size Lamdre lineage statues as being "deprived of their ritual essence and degraded to mere art objects" (as if there would have been much spiritual power and ritual function left of these Sakya masters after the "Cultural Revolution" and since having been shifted to a Nyingmapa monastery!) must go into an odd direction. This does not necessarily mean that an exhibition of religious art should "reduce" the sacred image to an artistic masterpiece, even when it is no more in ritual use. Flowers, candles, and other signs and symbols of devotion may well contribute to provide and to revive its spiritual presence such as when we can look at Buddhist statues in Japanese museums. Even in non-Buddhist Germany one would prefer to have the Seven Offering Bowls (ting phor or chu gtor) in front of the silken Cakrasamvara image filled with holy water, which, thus I have heard, was avoided for security reasons.

Official German statements credit the Tibetan monasteries with having actively shown courtesy and cooperation when lending their treasures for this exhibition. These encouraging background details are possibly associated with rhetoric and goodwill interpretations on the long way from Lhasa to Essen and Berlin. There was no doubt great courtesy and cooperation with the TAR Administrative Bureau of Cultural Relics and

their experts in Lhasa and beyond. Some monks of these monasteries are reported to have considered giving their treasures abroad so that the Dalai Lama would be able to see them in the exhibition.

Several esteemed Tibetan scholars now living in Germany were directly involved in this exhibition like Loden Sherab Dagyab Rinpoche and Geshe Pema Tsering (both from Bonn University) or provided valuable advice and assistance in loco or at home like Namgyal Gönpo Ronge (Königswinter/Bonn). H.H. Sakya Trizin, throneholder of the Sakya lineage, and his entourage visited the exhibition during their dharma tour in Europe. And as Professor Paul Vogt, director of the Villa Hügel Museum, said in an official statement: "We have been successful to open some doors, which were closed before this exhibition, and we do hope to have paved the way for future cultural encounters in this sense as they are planned in the USA, Japan and Korea. I believe in the possibilities and in the effect of such an active approach and engagement."

“Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet”

by Ulrich von Schroeder [130]

A revised review with new Addendum

Twenty years after *lndo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hongkong 1981), a standard work on Indian, Nepalese, Tibetan and Tibeto-Chinese metal images mostly in Western public and private collections, Ulrich von Schroeder has published a two-volume reference book of 1344 pages, with 1753 illustrations (1698 in colour) of over 1100 Buddhist statues and related imagery preserved in the Potala Palace and 26 monasteries of the Central Regions of Tibet (dbUs and gTsang provinces) and at a few sites in the far West (Nga'ri province), presently within theTibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), China.

This comprehensive documentation presents a selection of mainly ca. 8th through 15th century statues of approximately 10.000 extant images that survived the Cultural Revolution of 1966/67 and the years there after. Besides over 600 mostly Tibetan metal, clay and wooden images described and illustrated there are 101 sculptures produced by Nepalese artists (including those manufactured by Newaris in Tibet), 75 sculptures from northwestern India such as of the post-Gandharan style, from the Swat, Kashmir and Gilgit areas; 66 statues attributed to the Kashmir schools in the western Tibetan and Himalayan regions, 139 sculptures from northeastern India (in Pala and related styles); 67 Tibeto-Chinese gilt metal images of the early Ming dynasty and 13 early Chinese bronzes from the Northern Wei to the Tang period.

The first volume of *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet* (abbreviated here as BST) is dedicated to statues from India and Nepal. Chapter I and II refer to those from the northwest region of the Indian subcontinent:

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130 Review article: “Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet” by Ulrich von Schroeder. 2 volumes, Visual Dharma Publications, Hongkong 2001. In : Oriental Art (Singapore), vol. XLIX, no.2 (2003), pp. 49-60.

images from the 6th to 11th centuries from Swat, Hindukush, and Kashmir, including its northern borderlands around Gilgit, and its various schools in western Tibet and the western Himalayas (Himachal Pradesh). Chapters III to V document metal sculptures, models of the Mahābodhi temple at Bodhgaya, a few stupas, and miniature stone-carvings of Pala and related styles from northeastern India, ca. 750-1200 AD.

Chapter VII to VIII present Nepalese works from the later Licchavi to the early Malla period of ca. 7th to 14th century, with a main focus on ca. 10th to12th century metal images, including the early woodcarvings in the Lhasa Jokhang.

The second volume comprises statues made in Tibet and China. Chapter XII, the Tibetan Imperial Period, documents an especially pioneering research on hitherto unseen 7th-9th century metal images of the Yarlung (sPu rgyal) dynasty, including some images attributed to the Zhang Zhung Kingdom of Western Tibet, and a group of figures designed and cast by the Tenth Karmapa Choying Dorje (Chos dbyings rdo rje, 1604-74) in the style of the early dynastic period. The major part of the second volume, chapter XIII to XVIII, very generally labelled as "Tibetan Monastic Period", covers statuary made inTibet from the 11th - 15th centuries, with only a few additions up to the 16th and 17th century.

Chapter XIII entirely refers to clay sculptures, either still in situ such as at Yemar, Nyethang, Gyantse and in the Potala's Dharma King Meditation Cave, or in damaged or destroyed monasteries like Shalu, Nesar, Kyangbu and others.

A selection of ca. 12th-14th century miniature stone-carvings mostly manufactured by Nepalese artists in Tibet is shown in chapter XIV. Chapter XV comprises gilt copper and a set of sandalwood sculptures of the "Nepalese Schools in Tibet" of the 11th -17th centuries, with the partially questionable claim that all described images were produced by Newari artists in Tibet (and not in Nepal; see for example plates 216A, 217-221, etc.) or by Newaris at all (like 215A-D, 233D, 234C, 236A-241F).

Gilt copper statues of the "Tibetan Schools" in chapter XVI include a wide range from almost pure Newari style (!) images of the 11th century (248D) to monk portraits of the 18th century. In comparison with the "pure" Indian Pala works brought to Tibet (Vol.1, chapter III-V), chapter XVIII presents the brass sculptures of the "North-Eastern Indian styles in Tibet": images in the "Tibetan Pala style" (or "Pala Schools in Tibet"), produced in Tibet, either by Tibetan artists in a more or less characteristic Indian Pala style, or as suggested at least in sorne cases, by Indian craftsmen (284D, 286D, which both however appear to be doubtful, or 288A and C, 293A). Non-gilt brass sculptures of the "Tibetan Schools" from the 11th-17th centuries (primarily 12th through 14th century) make up the substantial part of chapter XVIII. Chapter XIX includes 13 Chinese gilt bronze images of the Northern Wei and Tang dynasties, among them three datet works of 462, 463, 473 and 484, all preserved except for one in the Potala Palace.

Chapter XX, the last chapter, documents 61 gilt Tibeto-Chinese gilt brass statues and three lotus mandalas of the early Ming period, of which 54 are inscribed with the six-character Yongle reign mark and two with the six-character Xuande signature, mostly kept in the Potala Palace (41 statues, of a total of circa 70 images!) and in the Lhasa Jokhang (15 statues).

Each chapter is introduced by an essay to the historical and cultural background with a discussion of specific art historical guidelines in relation to the documented images. Other chapters are dedicated to the "Stylistic Sources of Tibetan Art and Formation of Styles" to the "Tibetan Classifications of Metal Sculptures According to Styles", based on Tibetan texts (chapter IX); to the "Technical and Ritual Aspects of Metal Sculptures" including information and data on Tibetan casting centres and famous Tibetan sculptors (chapter X); and to "Selected Tibetan Literary References to Buddhist Sculptures" (chapter XI).

Of great scholarly value are the 125 pages of appendices: a glossary of mostly Sanskrit terms with their Tibetan equivalents and phonetic spellings, a general index and seven bibliographies of Sanskrit texts, histori-

cal and modern Tibetan publications of secondary literature in Western and in Chinese languages, Tibetan art exhibition catalogues, chronological lists to the Yarlung dynasty rulers and to the lineage holders of the principal Tibetan school traditions, of bibliographical references to the iconography of Buddhist deities, and to the 34 selected Tibetan monasteries (from which sculptures are illustrated in the book).

While von Schroeder has concentrated his field research (1991-2000) on selected sites in the Central Regions of Tibet, a few Kashmit style statues of the 11th and 12th century in Western Tibet (Tho ling, mKhar rtse, Phyi dbang) have been included with the help of Thomas J. Pritzker. Excluded is the whole area of eastern Tibet (Kham, Amdo). Regrettably the extensive collections of metal images at Sakya and Tashi Lhünpo monasteries, next to the Potala Palace and the Lhasa Jokhang the most important repositories of Buddhist sculptures in present-day Tibet, are not documented due to problems of access (which however would not explain the totally missing large gilt copper images of Sakya in the book!). Also not included are the remarkable collections of the new Tibet Museum in Lhasa, opened in the fall of 1999.[131]

Like in *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* all chapters are arranged in a catalogue-like system as the most suitable way for a reference book with hundreds of individual works of art. Each item has detailed text: iconographic name (in Sanskrit and Tibetan) and description, regional attribution and dating, present location with inventory number (where available), material and measurements, technical data, inscriptions (if any) in the original text and English translation, present condition, year of photography, and – one of the many assets of this monumental publication – in many cases iconographic references to the specific type or to related subjects of the statue shown in the book. Although by far most of the images in BST are documented for the first time, the reference-minded author has

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[131] Except four Yongle reign works formerly in the Norbulingka collection and in the Potala Palace (350A/B, 353C, 353D, 357A). See for a survey on the Lhasa Museum M. Henss, "The New Tibet Museum in Lhasa", Orientations, February 2000, p. 62-65.

overlooked several entries from earlier publications for reasons best known to himself.[132]

Essential scholarly assistance was provided by a number of specialists such as David Jackson, Cyrus Stearns and Heather Stoddard for Tibetan inscriptions, Gouriswar Bhattacharya and Oskar von Hinüber for Indian inscriptions, and Edward O'Neill and Max Deeg for Chinese inscriptions, and by lndologists Claudine Bautze-Picron and Gerd Mevissen for iconographical and epigraphical consultation.

Almost all photographs – of professional quality and excellent reproduction – were taken by the author himself on over 14 research trips to Tibet, a great achievement indeed in view of the fact that physical and administrative access to many of these relics can be very difficult. A great number of images in situ are often set behind glass or fencing and usually covered by brocades. Permission for photography and for more detailed investigations is normally given by the local monastic representatives while important cultural relics in the Potala Palace and the Jokhang temple are accessible by governmental agreement only.

Great attention has been given by von Schroeder to a clearly arranged layout of texts and illustrations. Plates, descriptions, further references and annotations to an individual object can be found on the same facing pages, a rare benefit for the reader of profusely illustrated books. Other authors may only dream of such favourable conditions in order to avoid the inconvenience of searching for footnotes at the back of a cumbersome 5kg volume and to be their own publisher. Visual Dharma Publi-

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[132] Accidentally (or not) all concerned statues without those references were published before by the reviewer, such as BST 199A, 199D/E, 200L, 200N, 229A and 230B in: M. Henss, Tibet. Die Kulturdenkmäler, Zürich, 1981, plates 46, 45, 50, 49, 47, 48; BST 1A/B, 1C-E, 30A-C, 31B/C, 43A/B, 52A-F, 84C, 106B/C, 108B, 109B/C, 139A/ B, 169B/C, 285C/D, 286D-F, fig.XVIII-4, 302A, 309A, 310E in: M. Henss, "Himalayan Metal Images of Five Centuries: Recent Discoveries in Tibet", Orientations, June 1996, figs. l0, 4, 3, 11, 9, 6, 7 and 7/a, 20, 19, 13, 14, 15, 22, 21, 23, 18, 5, 16, 17; BST 200E and 308B in M.Henss, "Early Tibetan Sculpture", in: On the Path to Void. Buddhist Art of the Tibetan Realm, ed.by P.Pal, Bombay, 1996, plate 9 and 11.

cations Ltd, based in Hongkong, published two earlier books by the author (*lndo-Tibetan Bronzes*, 1981, and *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 1990) and was in the fortunate position to go beyond the usual limits for academic books in sheer physical volume of pages and illustrations, in the quality of printing, and last but not least, in regard to the retail price, whose calculation may not have been exclusively based on actual cost, but also on the purchasing ability of libraries and scholars, art collectors and dealers, who simply cannot afford not to have this very book! Thus being in the admirable position of being able to fufill the multiple roles of a field-researcher and photographer, author and editor, publisher and distributor, Ulrich von Schroeder has been able to present a full-range documentation of his intensive studies, without restriction.

The strictly academic transliteration of Tibetan and Sanskrit names and words (additional Tibetan phonetic spellings are given in the index) is acceptable and necessary for a book destined to be rarely used by the general reader, but probably more by connoisseur-collectors and art dealers than by a majority of Tibetologists.[133] All names of deities are rendered in Sanskrit with their Tibetan equivalents in brackets.

Great attention has been paid to references. To many "catalogue" entries are added the specific iconographic literature, including publications to individual subjects, for example, to the crowned and to the "short-necked" Buddha (p. 50, 110, 144, 246ff., 264, 394ff.) and for most of the deities documented. There is, however, the burden of numerous repetitions throughout, although of benefit to the reader in being able to find all information on one and the same page, which usually would be part of a separate appendix.

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[133] It is a well-known fact that not all books with a more special subject are produced for the (very) special reader only. A problematic example is here - with regard to the transliteration of the Tibetan names and termini technici - Roberto Vitali's Early Temples of Central Tibet (London, 1990), which was basically not conceived - at least as seen by the publisher - for a handful of Tibetologists, but has come out arduously readable for those who are not.

One would have appreciated a more condensed and concentrated handling of bibliographic sources and termini technici being informed by 29 full-length reference repetitions of the shared biography (p.798-808) or by some hundred times of the same Sanskrit or Tibetan equivalent for a specific deity or mudra. One would question the use of a bibliography when the reader has to go through seven complete references in a single footnote (n.299). Additional bibliographical references can be found at the end of the various introductory chapters, for example, for the Gandharan and Swat Valley metal images, for the Patola-Shahi dynasty of Gilgit, for Himachal Pradesh and Western Tibet (Guge), for northeastern Indian metal and stone sculptures, miniature stone sculptures, Nepalese sculptures, for Newaris working in Tibet and Nepalese influences on Tibetan art, for Tibeto-Chinese and Sino-Tibetan art, or for specific subjects such as metal analysis and casting technique and to certain individual sites in Tibet with images previously or now in situ.

In quite a few cases these bibliographical surveys should be more specifically selected to correspond with a given subject, like for example in the chapter on the Tibeto-Chinese metal sculptures of the early Ming dynasty (p.1249), where one would expect clearly related titles (which in this case are not sufficiently listed!) instead of a sampling of Tang to Qing dynasty publications.

References to secondary and historical literature are overloaded throughout by giving in each case the full(!) text. Rather confusing is the practice of referring an individual site in all(!) passages of another publication wherever it is mentioned, instead of concentrating on the bold-type printed pages only (for example, Tucci 1973, Chan 1994, Jackson 1996). Space and volume were apparently no problem for BST!

The fact that Buddhist sculptures in Tibet comprise much more than only "local" Tibetan statuary gave way to a convincing overall classification of the material in situ, according to its de facto origin from India, Nepal, Tibet and China. This basic order produces however a number of natural, but not always unavoidable consequences. While the author has usually placed all works made by Newari artists in Tibet into the

second volume (under Tibet, p. 911-993), other sculptures made by Nepalese craftsmen like the woodcarvings in the Lhasa Jokhang must be sought in the first volume (under Nepal, p. 406-431). Similarly, one would expect the Potala Arya Avalokiteshvara, doubtlessly a Newar work, under Nepal in the first volume together with the much later Nepalese bodhisattvas in the same shrine, however, one finds it only on p. 820- 823 in the second volume, like other "pure" Nepalese statues as fig.VII-6 or figs.XV-9 and 10.

Although occasionally the attempt has been made to describe some of the criteria whenever Newari artists in Tibet may have adopted specific stylistic or technical features of the Tibetan traditions, the borderline between a portable work made by a Newari "at home" and brought to Tibet or produced in Tibet must remain logically open in many cases. Whereas monumental ca. 12th-14th century images like the magnificent Eight Bodhisattvas in Sera monastery (225A- 228D) or several statues in Shalu monastery (229C, 230A, 230B, etc.) were most probably cast by Newari ateliers in Tibet (whilst Newaris were painting the walls at Shalu), most of the smaller Nepalese style figures documented in volume I were certainly brought to Tibet. This pattern however would oversimplify the reality of the artistic relations between Tibet and Nepal in those times. Even life-sized gilt-copper images were commissioned and then transported to Tibet around 1200, according to a Tibetan text source.[134]

Von Schroeder's categorising of Nepalese style sculptures into "Nepal", will say made in Nepal and brought to Tibet (vol.I), and into "Nepalese Schools in Tibet", i.e. statues made either by Newaris in Tibet or by Tibetans after Newar models (vol. II), is certainly a very reasonable way of documenting such essential Nepalese-Tibetan issues in the art of the 11th through 14th centuries, but naturally runs into problems and doubtful attributions here and there. Or, what would finally make the difference between the bodhisattva Maitreya in Shalu (vol.I, fig.VI1-

[134] David Jackson, A History of Tibetan Painting, Wien, 1996, p. 95, note 149.

4) and the slightly later bodhisattvas at Sera (vol.II, fig.XV-9,10) to attribute them respectively to "Nepal" or the "Nepalese Schools in Tibet"? Or, what may justify giving to the lost Maitreya at Narthang (vol.I, fig.VII-6) a Nepalese origin instead of an attribution to a Nepalese image-maker working in Tibet?[135] And what would be the stylistic criteria to locate the Avalokiteshvara 167C-E or the Manjushri 164D to Nepal and several images of the same style like 217A-221A and 248D to the Nepalese Schools in Tibet, for which the author cannot give any distinctive arguments?

Thus one would expect to find over 60 statues in the Nepalese section and only those Nepalese style works under "Tibet", which on stylistic grounds – as far as it can be identified – were either produced by Tibetans in the Nepalese tradition, or by Newaris in Tibet who had adopted some specific Tibetan conventions on form and technique. This may also explain why only six or perhaps eight Nepalese statues from the Kathmandu Valley of the 14th and the 15th century can be found in BST, while many more of a distinctive Nepalese style or at least of Nepalese influence are classified as "Tibetan Schools".

A significant artistic complex of a dominating "Nepalo-Tibetan" stylistic profile in late 14th and early 15th century Tibet, like the imagery and decoration of the large gilt copper stupa reliquiaries at Densa Thil monastery (completely destroyed in 1966/67) is presented as a small chapter of its own with the help of old photographs, however, without a useful continous addition of related "Nepalo-Tibetan" images from the same period (255-262). The enormous quantity of gilt copper work at Densathil may well have resulted – and it most probably did – in a

[135] No serious evidence exists for an inscribed (?) date of this statue to "1093" as claimed in Liu Yisi, Xizang Fojiao Yishu (Buddhist Art of Tibet), Beijing, 1957, p. 8, plate 65, and overtaken by von Schroeder as "perhaps dated 1093 AD". Being of a similar style like the 12th century Sera bodhisattvas (fig.XV-9 and 10) this Maitreya might well have belonged to Narthang's foundation period (1153). It is surprising that from among hundreds of metal statues documented in BSTonly a single one (!) can be precisely dated (to 1713; 281A-C and p.1121).

significant stylistic quality that will confirm a regional style and technical convention created predominantly by Newar craftsmen, which according to von Schroeder "appears to have been modified according to the requirements of the Tibetan patrons to such an extent that the statues can be classified as Tibetan" (p.1010). However the author owes the references to the "pure" Kathmandu Valley style equivalents, either on Nepalese or on Tibetan territory.

With the exception of the Kashmir-dominated art in far away western Tibet, no specific regional schools seemed to exist in the sculptural traditions of the Central Regions (dbUs and gTsang provinces), the cultural heartland of Tibet. More than the specific area in Tibet (in the sense of the German term Kunstlandschaft) the distinctive "native" art tradition of a craftsman, his own regional school and atelier style – also when working outside his artistic "homeland" – determined the aesthetic profile of the 11th century statuary and painting in Shalu, Yemar, Kyangbu, or Drathang. The stylistic syncretism at these individual sites only illustrates the different artistic provenances. This however does not generally exclude the ability of a Nepalese or Tibetan artist to work in more than one style, in order to satisfy his customer or to follow certain local requirements and novelties when abroad.[136]

In the field of metal sculpture the artists and workshops were almost as mobile as their cast products. Consequently no attempt is being made in BST to specify certain images as "Central Tibetan" or "Southern Tibetan", a usually pretentious yet artificial classification, as recently found in various publications.

Similar problems for the Nepal-Tibet connection exist with regard to the import and influence of Indian works of art to Tibet and on Tibetan sculptures during the 9th-13th centuries. While the bulk of the mostly smaller Pala-style statuettes were brought by pious pilgrims and learned masters to the new holy land of the Buddhist faith, artists

[136] A fascinating, however difficult and yet unexplored research subject which would deserve a more systematic investigation!

from eastern India found their way to Tibetan temples and palaces as well. It would be strange in fact to identify numerous Indian statues as being brought to or made in Tibet - for which BST gives ample evidence - and to rule out the concrete possibility for some surviving "Tibetan" paintings that might have been produced by Indian artists. Although we have so far no inscriptional or literary records about statues in Central Tibet made by Indians from Bengal or Bihar, which are still preserved, there can be no doubt that there were more than those which have survived until today.[137]

[137] According to the „Great Biography" of Atisha, written sometime before 1469, this father of the Kadampa school, an Indian from Bengal himself, is said to have commissioned paintings in Vikramashila, his home monastery in present-day Bihar, which „were made by painters in east India and sent to Nyethang where they are now", cf. H.Eimer, Rnam that rgyas pas. Materialien zu einer Biographie des Atisha. Wiesbaden 1979, p.280f. - Sum pa khan po (1702-1775) mentions a reliquary stupa for Atisha manufactured in 1057 by the Indian artist Acarya Manu in Reding (Rwa sgreng) monastery, G. Tucci, Tibetan Painted Scrolls, Rome, 1949, p.89. Atisha himself had commissioned paintings in lndia which were brought to Tibet as stated by dPa' bo gTsug lag 'phreng ba (1504- 66) in his Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston, ed. by L.Chandra, Delhi, 1961, p. 314. According to Padma dkar po (1527-92) metal images were made by Indian artists in Central Tibet in early 9th century (E. Lo Bue, "Statuary metals in Tibet and the Himalayas: History, tradition and modern use", Bulletin of Tibetology, Gangtok, 1991, no.1-3, p.21). And it would be unlikely indeed that hundreds of lndian metal images were brought to Tibet, but no cloth paintings! See for the most recent discussion about lndian paintings in Tibet (or not), Dan Martin: "Painters, Patrons and Paintings of Patrons in Early Tibetan Art", in: Embodying Wisdom, ed. by R. Linrothe and H. Sorensen, Copenhagen, 2002, p. 139-184, which in my view however (depending on the interpretation of the painting's inscription) cannot rule out the possibility or likelihood that the Green Tara in the Ford Collection at Baltimore was indeed painted by an lndian artist for a Tibetan patron. Dan Martin's very much appreciated advice "that Tibetan art historians might do well to consult more often with their more literary and historically oriented fellow Tibetologists" seems to have its value vice versa as well in general and with regard to his own article (comparing the Ford-Tara with a much[!] later kesi "painting"): visual interpretation versus purely text-minded analysis? At last: serious art historical investigation – like in BST – should not be confused with just 'connoisseurship', which in the best sense cannot be as in many cases an alternative approach to solid art historical research, but its very essence.

Several superb monumental brass statues of 11th or 12th century in Ngor and Nyethang monasteries (106B-C, 106D, 108B), in the Potala Palace (107A-B, 107C-D) and Jokhang temple (109D- E), or in Sera monastery (226C-D) are convincingly attributed on stylistic grounds by von Schroeder to Indian image-makers (brought to or produced in Tibet), while other images like 108A, 109A, 284D or 286D in my opinion appear to be Tibetan castings in a more or less distinctive Pala style. Whether they were manufactured in India or in Tibet, must remain an open question. With reference to an Indian textual tradition, the author's guess however favours an import of these statues since "details such as garments and jewellery have traditionally been designed to conform with the local fashion" (p.216). If this holds true – and I doubt – for all Indo-Tibetan material, things would be much easier than they in fact are.

The sculpture of "Pala and Related Styles (ca.750-1200 AD)" from northeastern India, i.e. from the present Bihar and Bengal, is documented in three chapters (III-V): metal statues, stone and wood models of the Mahābodhi temple and of related shrines at Bodhgaya with an appendix on the cult of the stupa, and miniature stone carvings.[138] Among the 135 Indian brass, gilt copper and silver objects is an exceptional crowned Shakyamuni commissioned in memory of the Korean pilgrim to the Silk Road, Hui Chao (8th century) and cast in Nalanda during the 10th century. It is now preserved in the Potala Palace, the only known Indian metal image with a Chinese inscription, apparently engraved next to a Sanskrit dedication in the same Pala-Indian workshop (70.4-B). Furthermore there are four (of five) magnificent crowned Tathāgatas of the 11th century Kurkihar style with inlaid precious stones and glass in the Potala collection (78-81); two Cakrasamvara lotus mandalas of the late Pala period in the Jokhang (103C, 104C), whose compositional design was a major inspiration for the three large gilt Tibeto-

[138] Regrettably Indian and "Nepalo-Tibetan" miniature carvings, which are subject to difficult regional attributions anyway, are separated into vol.I (p. 369-405, India) and vol.II (p. 885-909, Nepalese works in Tibet, and Tibet).

Chinese mandalas of the early 15th century in Sakya monastery, in the Tibet Museum at Lhasa, and in the Potala Palace (349B, 350A-B, 35IA-B), and a 40 cm high Green Tara, a late Pala masterpiece, whose Indian origin according to the author is not only indicated by its stepped pedestal and inlaid glass "stones", but also by its highly elaborate throne architecture (110C).

A masterful study on its own is the chapter on the architectural replicas of the Mahābodhi temple at Bodhgaya, which were manufactured there between the 11th-13th centuries, and even at the imperial court of the early Ming in the 15th century. They served either – when of multi-component type and larger size – as models for the reconstruction of this Buddhist sanctum sanctorum elsewhere, or as gifts for Tibetan monasteries like those at Narthang (vol.I, figs.IV-4,5) and still preserved in the Potala Palace (111, 112).[139] The smaller models carved in one piece served as votif objects for visiting pilgrims in lndia (111-118). As stressed by several arguments in BST some of these miniature architectures are possibly the work of Burmese craftsmen, who were engaged in the first major restoration of the Bodhgaya temple around 1098. The most faithful copies like the 48.5 cm high sandalwood shrine in the Potala collection (111A-H) can be considered invaluable contemporary documents for the reconstruction of this most sacred Buddhist temple in India **(fig. 18).**

The vast material of miniature stone-carvings in the Potala collection (p.368-405) allows a representative survey on these northeastern Indian or Burmese "mobile arts" of 11th and 12th centuries which were carried along the pilgrim routes to Nepal and Tibet, to be copied and modified there by local artists (p.885ff.). The discussion on whether these easily portable images, which may have had a significant influence

[139] There can be no doubt that next to the Yongle reign marked model at sNar thang monastery (no more extant) the other "lndo-Chinese' large-size model preserved in the Potala collection (pl. 112) was carved on stylistic grounds at the early Ming court in Nanjing or Beijing.

on style and iconography in Tibetan art, were manufactured by Indians, Burmese, Tibetans or Newaris, is focussed by von Schroeder primarily on Indian ateliers with serious arguments, contradictory and speculative attributions of similar miniature sculptures to Tibetan workshops[140], which at that time would not have developed the same refined artistic know-how in this field. However, while such a theory may characterise the essentially formative period of 11th century, it must not necessarily have the same "exclusive" value for the later phase of the Second Diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet (phyi dar), when Tibetan artists had achieved the "Indian standard".[141]

Von Schroeder distinguishes between "North-Eastern India", those images, made in India and brought to Tibet, and the "Indian Works for Tibetans" understood as manufactured by Indians in Tibet (why not also in India, like larger images such as 120B-C?), with Tibetan monks illustrated, a Tibetan inscription or a Tibetan seal at the back. This classification however remains speculative in several cases, like for example in 121B-E, 122B, 122D, etc.

A selection of well-known stone plaques depicting the "major events in the life of Shakyamuni" (128A- 131C) serve to clarify the Indian-Burmese issue in late Pala dynasty art as discussed in recent publications. Here the author offers positive answers to questions of cross-cultural relations such as the origin of the "short-necked Buddha", whose prototype was probably "developed in Eastern Bengal and spread from there

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[140] As forwarded by C.L. and J.C. Huntington, Leaves from the Bodhi Tree. The Art of Pala India. Dayton, 1990, p. 359-363.

[141] The almost complete lack of Tibetan miniature carvings from 11th-13th centuries in BST is additionally explained by the author with the little appreciation for stone sculpture in Tibet. This theory however, which would principally exclude early works of an previously foreign art tradition produced by indigenous craftsmen, may not finally meet the Tibetan art reality and lead to the wrong conclusion, that most of the early foreign styles were practised on a high aesthetic level by foreign artists only. How fast Tibetans were able to follow the Newar style of around 1300 on the highest niveau, is shown by some early 14th century murals on the inner walls of the Yum chen mo Lha khang corridor at Shalu monastery signed by Tibetan painters.

to Burma" (p.394), from where it might have been reintroduced by Burmese craftsmen to Indian Buddhist centres like Bodhgaya.

While the method to group all the statues according to their stylistic identity and provenance, distinctive historical periods, individual sites, and even specific technical traditions like for example clay statuary, corresponds to and results logically from the different material in situ, a classification into gilt copper and non-gilt brass sculptures like in the author's *lndo-Tibetan Bronzes* (1981) gives priority only to technical "catalogue-type" categories over the art historical context, which one may prefer as a more appropriate guide.

Of significant scholarly value and pioneering research is the presentation of a small corpus of early Tibetan metal sculptures preserved in the Lhasa Jokhang, Potala Palace, and in the Mindröl Ling (sMin grol gling) monastery, attributed in BST to the Imperial Period ("Yarlung dynasty"; p.736-769,7th-9th centuries), hitherto terra incognita in Tibetan art history.[142] Probably with the exception of a seated Buddha (182C-E)[143], eight copper and silver figures are convincingly documented as the oldest surviving castings from Tibet, whose archaic style as well as their composite Hindu and Buddhist or partially enigmatic iconography basically indicates influences of Nepalese Licchavi period statuary (compare 177B with 147B). However this does not seem to properly

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142 Occasional attempts to date Tibetan metal images in Western collections to the ca. 8th or 9th century have failed in my opinion, including a most recent example of a superb 51,4 cm high seated Vairocana of the early phyi dar period, published as "9th century" in P. Pal, Himalayas. An Aesthetic Adventure, New York, 2002 (exhibition Chicago in 2003), no.109.

143 See for analogous, though not really "similar" ca. 11th century Nepalese and Tibetan style images BST 216 and 294E. Compare also 182C-E with a probably 11th century Buddha image (head and physiognomy!) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (no.1995.106: "9th-10th century"). Von Schroeder does not give arguments for his "ca. 9th century" date and this nevertheless remarkable statue remains stylistically isolated without anything comparable from the supposed early period. The facial features and the proportions of the head would rather suggest a ca. 11th century date.

correspond to classical Newari works like the contemporary wood carvings in the Lhasa Jokhang (compare 178A and 179D with 134F or 135B. **(figs. 91-94; compare fig. 93 with fig. 108).**

An excellent sub-chapter of the "Tibetan Imperial Period" is dedicated to the copies and variations of early Yarlung dynasty and Kashmir style images, produced by an outstanding artist, the Tenth Karmapa Chöying Dorjee (Chos-dbyings rDo-rje, 1604-74), a multi-talented and eccentric artisan among the high-ranking Tibetan clergy (p.796-819).

Based on earlier studies by David Jackson[144], von Schroeder, with the help of some 17th century inscriptions on three ca. 7th or 8th century copper images (174-176), and using extensive biographical texts made available and translated by Cyrus Stearns and David Jackson, has been able to connect some works with the Tenth Karmapa. Altogether there are 11 metal, ivory and wood statues that he attributes to this hierarch, who not only had a particular passion for the Kashmir and early Tibetan style, but also copied and transformed - in a very personal manner - Chinese Buddhist and Tibetan paintings of the Yuan dynasty and other periods (figs. XII-23, 24, 25).

By establishing this small corpus of sculptures and paintings of an individual artist, the author has unveiled a few mysteries of chronology and provenance, like for example of three Sarasvati images in the Potala Palace (194A-D) and in the Rietberg Museum (Zürich) collections, made a thousand years after the older models (178, 179), and thus a new contribution to the general problem of stylistic copies in Tibetan art. One would however hesitate to label this specific renaissance of early styles as a revival "school" since it seems to be related too exclusively to an individual artist without having effected a broader production beyond his "atelier". Further sculptures and paintings may turn up in the future connected with the oeuvre of the Tenth Karmapa, which has

144 Jackson 1996, op cit., p. 247-258.

been, as it is admiringly reported by his biographer, a real "delight for the eye".

Unlike the only extant monumental sculptures of Yarlung dynasty Tibet, the clay bodhisattvas and guardians at 'On Keru Lha khang of ca. 820/830[145], the simple and considerably reworked stone carvings in Lhasa's Drag lha Lu pug (Brag Iha klu phug) cave sanctuary do not present reliable stylistic clues to state that "more than half of them" can be attributed to Nepalese craftsmen of the ca. 8th century as von Schroeder suggests (p.729, 732-733).[146] One may rather consider a late 11th century date for the earliest carvings during the Second Diffusion of the Buddhist faith, at a period when stylistically similar pillar decorations were most probably added to the reconstruction of the Jokhang.

The overall order of the material in BST (Nepal in vol.I, Tibet in vol.II) has led to an unfortunate separation of the early wood carvings in the Jokhang, completely illustrated here for the first time (vol.I, p. 407-431), from the Tibetan Imperial Period chapter (vol.II, p.721ff.), where one would expect these incunabula among the earliest Buddhist sculptures made in Tibet, despite the fact that they were manufactured by Newari artists. Like most of the doorway carvings on the ground and upper floors, the figural carvings of four pillar bases may not "probably" (BST, p.411) be attributed to the initial construction period of the 7th or 8th century, but they can be safely dated to that period by all stylistic evidence, by comparing the ornamental design of these pillars to other post-Gupta sculptures in Nepal and India.[147] Although most of the nar-

[145] Vitali 1990, op.cit., p.1-35.

[146] Von Schroeder's tentative dating is based here on the Tibetan text tradition and on a modern Chinese publication (CPAM Xizang, "An inspection of the grottoes at Chala lufu in Lhasa" [in Chinese], Wenwu, 9/1985, p. 51-64). Both however are not acceptable for a more precise dating of these stone carvings.

[147] See for example M.C. Slusser, Nepal Mandala. A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley, Princeton, 1982, plate 298, 267. For the Jokhang atlant fig.VI-10, I can see no evidence regarding a possible "later replacement" (BST, p. 411). Later carvings in the Jokhang of 11th or 12th century can be seen with practically all pillars of the north,

rative sceneries on the four pairs of doorway lintels illustrating apparently the Jātaka and Avadāna tales and legends, cannot be precisely identified, BST describes their iconographic vocabulary in as much as the present state of our knowledge allows. The iconography of these earliest "Buddha stories" in Tibet however would still deserve a detailed investigation of the related literary text sources which presumably can be found in the once very popular *Gaṇḍavyūha sūtra* (The Garland Sutra of the World)" [148], a parallel literary narrative on the life of the Buddha, whose text tradition was especially connected with Khotan, a Buddhist metropolis in Central Asia from where not only the Chinese translaters obtained this last part of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* (as seen by them), but probably also the patrons and artisans of the Lhasa Jokhang[149].

If we accept this textual basis at least as a main source, the Jokhang lintels depicting the pilgrimage of the Indian prince Sudhana and his encounter with various gods and kings, monks and hermits, laymen and maidens, who all represent the Buddha nature, would be meant to serve as an example to master the different stages of the pilgrim's journey and spiritual development along the gradual path towards ultimate truth and enlightenment.

The identification of most of the Jokhang pillars and carvings with acacia wood (p.407) goes back to the Fifth Dalai Lama's dkar chag to this temple (1645: "seng ldeng"). Its correctness however remains uncertain.

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south and west section on the ground and first upper floors (see for example Precious Deposits. Historical Relics of Tibet, China. Beijing, 2000, vol.1, p.155).

[148] See Amy Heller, "The Lhasa gTsug lag khang: Observations on the Ancient Wood carvings". The Tibet Journal, vol.XXIX, no.3, 2004, p.3-24.

[149] See for a detailed study on this sutra Jan Fontein, The Pilgrimage of Sudhana. A Study of *Gaṇḍavyūha* illustrations in China, Japan and Java, 's-Gravenhage, 1966; and for a completely illustrated (Chinese) cycle: The Life of Buddha Shakyamuni and the 53 visits of Sudhana. Buddhist Culture Research Institute of China, 2 vols. Hongkong, 1996. See also D. Klimburg-Salter, The Life of the Buddha in Ta-pho Monastery, Himachal Pradesh. Text and Image, South Asian Archaeology, 1995, Delhi 1997, vol.2, p. 673-690.

The only region in Tibet where *acacia catechu* has been possibly endemic, would be the southernmost Kongpo border areas to India. A common Tibetan wood for building construction is juniper which could be safely identified in the pillars and beams in this temple.[150]

Although decorative silverware like the well-known but nevertheless still enigmatic "Wine Jar of King Songtsen Gampo" in the Lhasa Jokhang **(fig. 95)** does not actually belong to Buddhist statuary, it must have played an important role among Tibetan arts and crafts during the Imperial Period, as it is documented by Chinese literary sources and similar objects recently found in Tibet. This only major silver vessel of its kind still preserved in Tibet (though apparently not at its very original site) and illustrated properly in BST for the first time has been subject to different speculations ranging from being a modern replica from the 1940s (H. Richardson 1977), a Sassanian original of 7th to 9th centuries (Su Bai 1996), an 8th-century Sassanian-influenced Sogdian work from Tadzhikistan (BST, p.747, 792-95), to a Tibetan amalgam of Sogdian style and iconography combined with Chinese and Tibetan motifs of the ca. second half of the 8th or early 9th century (A. Heller 2002)!

The characteristic long-sleeved and amply-cut robes indicate apparently a Tibetan origin of this jar whose dancing figures otherwise would emphasize Central Asian models from Sogdiana, combined with certain Chinese motifs and thus reflecting a somehow "international" vocabulary in earliest Tibetan art, corresponding to the early empire's extension allover Central Asia.[151]

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[150] Two samplers from different wooden structures in the Lhasa Jokhang (in one case taken from one of the most ancient pillars in the eastern section) were identified by Dr.Bräuning, Geographical lnstitute of Stuttgart University, as juniper. The wood of the carved lintels however must not belong necessarily to the same species.

[151] For a most recent discussion with further references see Amy Heller, "The Silver Jug of the Lhasa Jokhang. Some Observations on silver objects and costumes from the Tibetan Empire (7th-9th century)", www.asianart.com. 2002. According to Heller, who also questions von Schroeder's theory of a bacchanalian iconography, foreign elements like the Sogdian-style dancers, Chinese musical instruments, and the more amply designed Tibetan robes as well as specific ornamental patterns and the hammered tech-

Although nothing really comparable with the antique "Western" figural style exists, the latter hypothesis seems to be closest to the truth. Tibetan text sources confirm indeed the existence of several silver beer vessels with animal heads (among them three depicting a camel) said to be buried in "treasure tombs" in the Yarlung Valley[152] or hidden by King Songtsen Gampo and rediscovered in later times as "treasures" gter ma) like it is traditionally known in connection with the Jokhang jar for Tsongkhapa, who would have offered it to its present place in around 1409. Due to style and technical condition the horizontal friezes must have been added when the silver pitcher was obviously reconstructed in 1946 and reportedly reworked over a stone bowl made to contain and to keep the chang beer which has been offered since then(?) by the pilgrim.[153]

For reasons of context and chronology one would have preferred to find the most sacred Buddhist image of Tibet, the Jowo Shakyamuni or "Jo bo Rin po che" **(fig. 96),** like the early wood-carvings in the Jokhang or the Arya Avalokiteshvara in the Potala Palace, as part of the

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nique of the non-repoussé section would indicate a manufacture of the Jokhang silver jar in Tibet, an opinion, which is also supported by Prof. Boris Marshak of the State Hermitage Museum at St.Petersburg, the foremost expert on Sogdian art and silverware.

[152] Like at Yum bu bLa mkhar, See Eric Haarh, The Yarlung Dynasty, Copenhagen, 1969, p. 354.

[153] Except the year 1946 the partially illegible inscription does not give further informations on this gter ma, but seems to refer to the rediscovery and to a major renovation or reconstruction at that time, when at the same occasion it was reportedly regilded as told in the memoirs of a Lhasa official (oral communication by Dr.Joachim Karsten, 1998). The "mysterious" stone vessel inside (rdo gyam, "carved stone", according to Tibetan informants) has been most probably manufactured for the reconstruction of the silver jar in 1946, although local tradition claims that it was made at Tsongkhapa's time. According to Kah thog Si tu's report of around 1920 this silver jar was found by Tsongkhapa(?) in Drag Yerpa (Brag yer pa), east of Lhasa, and would have been originally used already by the Yarlung dynasty rulers to contain chang beer offerings for secular celebrations (Kah thog Si tua'i dBus gTsang gNas yig, Lhasa, 1999, p. 93). During the Cultural Revolution the chos rgyal khrung ban was stored in the Norbulingka Palace, to be "rediscovered" once more, an extraordinary "treasure" indeed, in 1979.

Tibetan Imperial Period chapter (XII) instead of being classified separately under "Nepalese Schools in Tibet" (chapter XV, p.926-929). However von Schroeder's attribution of this palladium of Buddhist Tibet to a Nepalese artist of the "11th to 13th century" (BST, p.926) is purely speculative and remains without any positive stylistic, literary or other arguments.

Although several historical texts record restorations and replacements of the crown (the present one dates from the time of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama), of the throne-back (Skt. prabhāmandala, Tib. rgyab yol), and of the baldachin architecture (Tib. bla bre), they are quite silent with regard to the proper image.[154] Many layers of repeated cold-gildings and the somewhat idealised and "ageless" style of a highly revered "archetype" statue make a dating of the Jowo difficult. The proportions as well as the stylistic rendering of the robe - when the Buddha can be seen undressed during the ceremony of a complete regilding - and the way its folds are drawn seem to make, in my opinion, a pre-17th century date of the present statue at least in its surface condition today quite unlikely.[155]

No other Tibetan or Nepalese metal image[156] can be really compared on stylistic grounds with the Jokhang Buddha, although the latter's overall design may well follow an earlier icon and thus intentionally reproduce somehow the "classical" Jo bo che ba, "the Great Jowo", as it has been traditionally called, with reference to the "Small Jo bo" in the Ramoche

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[154] See Michael Henss, The Cultural Monuments of Tibet. The Central Regions, forthcoming, chapter I.3.

[155] This became evident during a complete regilding of the Jo bo sponsored by the reviewer in 1994. Although the two volumes of BST were "humbly presented" to the Jo bo Buddha, its author was apparently not humble enough to avoid, in accordance with the religious rules in the Jokhang, the publication of a photograph of the image when undressed (pls. 215B-C).

[156] See for example the other proportions of the head and the different style of the body and the robe of the Buddha statues in the same central chapel of the Jokhang (215D, late 11th century), in Nyethang (199A, 309C), of the Jo bo Buddhas in Sakya (around 1300) and Gyantse (1425), or at Tashi Lhünpo (1461, not identical with BST, fig. XVI-1).

temple (vol.I, fig.XV-I). Besides the repoussé work of the lower prabhamandala section the proportions and the compositional features of the head and the design of the lotus base also seem to recall the over life-size Jowo Buddha in the Potala Palace of the late 17th century (sitting next to the Fifth Dalai Lama image of similar size) and comparable monumental metal statuary of that period.[157]

These stylistic considerations are supported by the long inscription on the back of the baldachin architecture surmounting the Jowo **(fig. 97)**, which records a comprehensive renovation under the Fifth Dalai Lama (not the Fourth Dalai Lama as claimed by von Schroeder) "from the 18th day of the first month until the 25th day of the twelfth month in the Water-Ox Year" (1673).[158] The oldest part of the whole decorative metal work around the actual Skakyamuni statue is apparently the upper bracket section of the canopy architecture (with semi-precious stones added during the renovation in 1673), which corresponds exactly to the architectural style of the Sakya-Yuan period (compare Shalu monastery!) and thus would be the original work of the genius Newari artist Aniko (Chin. Anige, 1244-1306) from 1262, as it is recorded in the well-known "guide" to the Lhasa Tsuglagkhang by the Fifth Dalai

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[157] When at the occasion of a regilding ceremony for the Jo bo chung ba in the Ramoche on 21st June 2000 I was able to see the undressed statue, the design of the robe and especially the facial features and the proportions of the head indicated quite clearly - in agreement with von Schroeder's identification - a Nepalese workmanship of the Tibetan phyi dar period, 11th or 12th century (fig. XII-12, p. 739, and fig. XV-1, p. 910).

[158] This inscription which I copied in full length in 1981 and which, so far as I know, has never been recorded and translated, presents a wealth of detailed information about the donations of countless jewelleries and precious stones for the reconstruction of the whole throne and canopy architecture and of the prabha-mandala decoration (not only of the throne-back as stated in BST!), including 75 names of (mostly) Newari and Tibetan artisans. The main responsible person for these works, bLo bzang mThu stobs (as mentioned in the inscription), was the administrator of the Ramoche temple under the Fifth Dalai Lama (see Sangs rGyas rGya mTsho, Life of the Fifth Dalai Lama, vol.lV, part 1, transl. from the original Tibetan by Zahiruddin Ahmad, Delhi, 1999, p. 267.

Lama.[159] Except for this baldachin architecture and the huge Bai ta si Stupa in Beijing (1271) no other works by Aniko have survived. It seems however that, if it was not made by his own hand, the artistic essence and milieu of this gifted architect, painter and image-maker might be recognized in a painting, like the famous Cleveland Tara[160], which on stylistic and iconographic grounds alone must be ascribed to a Nepalese artist working for Tibetan patrons in the third quarter of the 13th century.

It would be surprising indeed not to find any stylistic equivalent among Tibetan metal sculpture. Although BST seems to confirm the contrary in the chapters on Nepalese works and schools in Tibet and Yuan China in the 13th century, the Nepalo-Tibetan style of Aniko – as we may reconstruct it – and his artistic heritage does exist in a small number of copper images dating to the second half of 13th century, some of them with sophisticated metal inlays, all of them characterised by a late Pala style in a Newar-Tibetan interpretation. A Green Tara in the Potala Collection **(fig. 98)** can be regarded as a sculptural counterpiece to the painted Tara in the Cleveland Museum of Art, while an Avalokiteshvara Padmapani in the Tibet Museum at Lhasa represents the same style on the highest quality level **(fig. 99**; compare also **fig. 100).**[161]

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[159] The semi-precious stones were doubtlessly added to these Chinese style metal brackets in 1673, and it seems very unlikely that the present bracket system of the upper baldachin section would be a 17th century copy replacing the original metal structures of the 13th century (with much probability by Aniko in 1262).

[160] An artistic relation between the Cleveland Tara and the presumed style of Aniko was also suggested by Steven M. Kossak in Sacred Visions. Early Paintings from Central Tibet. New York. 1998, no.37.

[161] In my opinion several mostly non-gilt copper statuettes of ca. 15-25 cm in height may possibly represent an "Aniko sculptural style", including probably even direct fore-runners, characterised by a basic Pala design and "feeling", however of non-Indian make, by elegant postures and movements, and in some cases with a highly refined inlay work, and similar double-lotuses:

- Green Tara, Lhasa, Potala Palace Coll.; Xizang Budala Gong, Beijing, 1996, plate 298.

Among the clay statues in the Jowo sanctum, plate 215D does not illustrate the Mi 'khrugs pa alias Dīpaṅkara Buddha in the back of the Jowo, but the original image of Thub pa Gangs chen mtsho (rgyal), a form of Vairocana, which was erected here between 1076 and 1087, together with the present twelve bodhisattva clay statues of which one would have expected at least one example to be illustrated in BST, despite their slightly less authentic condition compared with the approximately contemporary clay bodhisattvas at Nyethang monastery near Lhasa.

The statues at Nyethang shown without the usual brocades (p.860-869) indicate in my opinion an earlier date to the second half of the 11th century (BST, 199B-200H, 199F,G: " ca.1200".[162] The style and even specific motifs of their characteristically pleated robes (199B-E, 200B,C) recall the wall-paintings of Drathang monastery, datable to 1081 -1093, apart from 11th century Nepalese elements and from the different stylistic idioms existing simultaneously during this early formative period (which should not be misunderstood by a chronological interpretation!). They also recall the 11th century statuary at Yemar (vol.II, fig. XIII-3).

- Green Tara, Lhasa, Tibet Museum(?); Xizang Lishi Wenwu Xuancui, Beijing, 2001, ill. p. 178-179.

- Avalokiteshvara Padmapani, Lhasa, Tibet Museum; Precious Deposits, 2000, op.cit., vol.III, no. 23.

- Bodhisattva Maitreya, Lhasa, Tibet Museum; Xizang Lishi Wenwu Xuancui, op.cit., ill. p. 172-173.

- Avalokiteshvara, Newark (USA), The Newark Museum; V.Reynolds, From the Sacred Realm. Treasures of Tibetan Art from the Newark Museum, Munich-New York 1999, ill.p.224.

- Vajrapani, Philadelphia Museum of Art; P.Pal, Tibet. Tradition and Change. Albuquerque (USA), no.50.

- Avalokiteshvara Padmapani, Sotheby's New York 22.3.1989, no.282.

See on these images reflecting possibly the "Anige style" M.Henss, Is there any "Anige Style" in Nepalo-Tibetan and Tibeto-Chinese Metal Sculpture of the Sa skya-Yuan Period? Third International Conference on Tibetan Art and Archaeology, Beijing, 15.10.2006 (Proceedings, forthcoming), and in: Palace Museum Journal, no.5, vol.133, 2007 (Beijing), p.51-66 (in Chinese).

[162] See Henss 1996 (Early Tibetan Sculpture), p. 109, fig. 9.

An earlier date, to the decades after Atisha had died in Nyethang (in 1054), is further supported by the overall composition and the style of the haloes compared with those at Drathang and in the Jokhang sanctum (both of late 11th century), and also by the lotus petals of the bases and the characteristic crown blades, by the lions of Amitayus throne, and by the fact that metal images of 11th or 12th century have survived here (which were most probably manufactured at Nyethang), for an early temple building at this site.

As to the essential role Nyethang played for Atisha, it is quite unlikely that a first major sanctuary was erected only 150 years after the master's death. In the *Blue Annals* [163] his main disciple Domtön ('Brom ston) is said to have "built a vihāra at sNye-thang", and according to another source, some stupas with (part of) his relics, his personal meditation images, and a corporal relic of Naropa brought by Atisha toTibet, did exist in the sNye thang 'Or temple[164], also known as sKu 'bum Iha khang, the oldest building of the monastic complex at Nyethang (now reconstructed). In addition von Schroeder's dating is based on a misunderstanding in Alfonsa Ferrari's annotations to mKhyen brtse's farnous guide-book of 1892, wrongly identifying a monastic settlement of bDe ba can established in 1205 with the actual Nyethang temple.[165]

Besides the Nyethang statues, the chapter (XII) on Tibetan clay sculptures discusses Yemar Lhakhang **(figs. 101, 102)** and other sites south of Gyantse with the most refined images of 11th century south of Gyantse completely demolished during the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s, but fortunately photographed and partially documented be-

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163 G. N. Roerich, The Blue Annals, Calcutta, 1949, reprint Delhi, 1988, p. 263.

164 After a 20th century Tibetan biography "compiled from the Tibetan sources", in A. Chattopadhyaya, Atisha in Tibet. Calcutta, 1967, p. 439; A. Ferrari, mKhyen brtse's guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet, Rome, 1958, p. 72, note 668.

165 Op,cit.,note 668. bDe ba can is however identical with Rwa stod monastery (as it was later named), which still exists some three miles southwest of sNye thang (see Roerich, Blue Annals, op.cit.,p. 542).

tween 1937 and 1948. However Heather Stoddard's theory[166] used by von Schroeder to explain the much discussed Central Asian stylistic elements of these images (as a result of the activities of Tibetan monks who sought refuge in northeast Tibet after the demise of the Imperial Period and returned to Central Tibet during the second half of the 10th century), does not really match the historical and cultural-geographical circumstances.

"Central Asia" would consequently be understood as territory of the later Xixia kingdom, but no Tangut or related cultural relics exist from that early period, and of a similar style to the "Nine Bends of the Yellow River" in the Minyag border-areas of northeastern Tibet! The specific style of the Yemar statues and of their lost relatives between Shalu and Drathang (BST, p. 832-851), which one should recognise as a very creative Tibetan transformation of foreign inspirations, cannot just be traced back to proper "Silk Road" models, but seem to have its closest roots – beyond their distinctive differences – between Dunhuang and Bezeklik. Here can be found among the wall-paintings of 9th and 10th centuries (and very likely among former statues as well), an analogy to late "Gandharan mannerism" of exuberant robes and draperies with characteristic neatly-pleated folds, elements of a comparable colour palette in the ornamental design, and similar floral motifs as well as body and head halos.[167] Which other paintings and statues would in fact represent "dis-

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[166] H. Stoddard, "Early Tibetan Paintings: Sources and Styles (11th to 14th centuries A.D.)", Archives of Asian Art, vol.XLIX, 1996, p. 30-37.

[167] For example Dunhuang caves nos. 36, 99,158, 327, Bezeklik cave no.3. See M. Henss, "A Unique Treasure of Early Tibetan Art: The Eleventh Century Wall Paintings of Drathang Gonpa", Orientations, June 1994 (p. 48-53), p. 52; and a slightly revised version in: Tibetan Art. Towards a definition of style, ed.by J.Casey-Singer and P.Denwood, London, 1997, p. 168-169 (and fig.187). The probable Bezeklik-style connection is also forwarded by Marilyn M.Rhie, "Eleventh-Century Monumental Sculpture in the Tsang Region", in: Tibetan Art. Towards a definition of style, ed.by J.Casey-Singer and Ph. Denwood, London, 1997, p. 41, fig.10.

tinct artistic traditions accessible to Tibetans in the second half of the tenth century", as suggested by Heather Stoddard?[168]

How these artistic ideas and models from the Silk Route reached Tibet, whether through "note-books" of the artists or portable paintings and smaller images, remains a mystery. Certainly not via metal statues, such as an unpublished Vairocana of exactly the "Yemar style" in a private Chicago collection **(fig. 103),** a piece which reflects this specific formal tradition and illustrates that (seen from a more general art historical perspective) monumental clay statuary and portable metal sculpture were more oftenly interrelated than von Schroeder's partially rigid 'catalogue style' classification suggests.

One wonders why von Schroeder does not give more credit to the oldest surviving clay statues at 'On Ke ru Lha khang, opposite Yarlung Valley and not far from Samye monastery, except for a photograph taken by Roberto Vitali (vol.II, fig.XII-2), which, even without any further commentaries, would make more sense (a hundred pages ahead) in connection with "Tibetan Clay Sculptures". Although restored and repainted several times, the bodhisattvas and guardians were, with the exception of the central Buddha, convincingly attributed by Vitali to a slightly later reconstruction period of the8th century temple during the first half of 9th century. The fact that the ancient patina has eroded should not justify the exclusion of these incunabula of Tibetan statuary in BST.

The royal clay images in the "Dharma King Meditation Cave" of the Potala Palace (p.852-859) have until recently remained one of the prominent mysteries in Tibetan art history. Their well-known popular attribution to the legendary foundation period of a first residential castle

[168] H.Stoddard 1996, op cit., p. 29.

on the Potala hill has never been questioned and has found even support among modern Western as well as Tibetan and Chinese scholars.[169]

It is remarkable that the essential question – even without stylistic considerations and speculations about the proper statues of whether there were any building structures and other activities on the dMar po ri between the 7th and 17th centuries, has been never raised in modern publications. Tibetan historical texts also do not record shrines or statues for the centuries after the Imperial Period until the construction of the present Potala Palace in 1645.[170] Although von Schroeder's tentative date for these images to the 14th century is only based on some speculative proposals by Hugh Richardson and Eberto Lo Bue, and not on specific positive arguments, he is finally quite close to the stylistically earliest possible physiognomy of the royal effigies of the 14th or 15th century.

However, I am not confident of a pre-1645 manufacture for the Potala royalty and would prefer to characterise them as archaistic works in an

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[169] See on this subject also here p.35-37 and fig. 12-14, and the publications by M. Rhie 1988 and Jam Yang 1994 (BST, References, p.855). The very fact that the concept of a secular king as an incarnation of Avalokiteshvara can be traced back only to the 11th century (inscription an the wall-paintings in Tabo monastery, Spiti, from 1042: "this king, personification of a god"; D. Klimburg- Salter, Tabo. A Lamp for the Kingdom. Milan, 1997, p. 258), rules out for mere iconographic reasons an earlier date of the Potala statues.

[170] In his dkar chag from 1645 the Fifth Dalai Lama mentions these (?) statues of Songtsen Gampo and his wives in the central sanctuary of the upper floor section in the Jokhang, and, including the images of the king's son and his two ministers, "in the present shrine in the center of the [ancient] king's palace" on the Potala hill; see A.Grünwedel, Die Tempel von Lhasa, Heidelberg, 1919, p. 46f., 73. Though the Fifth Dalai Lama account may give the impression of an already existing pre-1645 "royal sanctuary" it probably refers to the earliest structures of the new palace, which were just completed before the dkar chag was written. Residences of eminent teachers an the dMar po ri are recorded for about 1076 in the Blue Annals (Roerich 1988, op.cit.,p. 70, 71, 93). In 1240 a "Potala'i Lha khang" is said to have been destroyed by the Mongols (Bad rgya tshig mdzod chen mo, Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary, 2 vols. ed. Beijing, 1993, vol.II, p. 3229, without further reference).

ideal "imperial style" of the mid-17th century.[171] (see for example **fig. 107)**. The hypothesis of an archaistic "historical style" would not only find support in the concept of ideological continuity from a secular ruler to bodhisattva and back, but also by some recently discovered wall-paintings of the 17th century (and not of 7th century as believed by local experts) which present comparable royal figures drawn in an early "monarchic style".[172]

The closest parallels to the royal statues in the Potala and in my opinion probably their actual models, are the very similar, yet slightly "more ancient" and less elegantly designed clay statues in the Lhasa Jokhang. They have been preserved until 1966, mentioned in BST in a single line (p. 855: "of unknown age").[173] Although they pose analogous problems of chronology like their Potala counterparts, a 14th century date - the earliest possible on pure stylistic grounds -seems to be very likely. This would be confirmed not only by the building history of the Lhasa Tsuglagkhang, but also by at least two Tibetan text sources, according to which the Jokhang kings and queens were commissioned under the 'Tshal pa khri dpon, one of the Yuan period monarchs of Tibet and the actual ruler of Lhasa towards the middle of the 14th century.[174]

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[171] That the rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long chronicle from 1368 does not mention the royal statues on the Potala hill (however the most sacred image of Arya Avalokiteshvara) or in the Jokhang, might be explained either by the simple fact that they did not exist yet, however more likely by their less importance compared with the principal sacred statues at those places.

[172] A Mirror of the Murals in the Potala, Beijing, 2000, plates p. 141-143.

[173] The pre-1966 royal statues in the Jokhang were replaced by replicas in the 1970s.

[174] See Loden Sherab Dagyab, Tibetan Religious Art. Wiesbaden, 1977, p. 36: "commissioned according to the Chinese tradition of art"; Chab spel Tshe brtan Phun tshogs: Lha sa gTsug lag khang gi lo rgyus rags bshad (Explanation of the History of the Lhasa Tsuglagkhang), in Bod ljongs zhib jug, Lhasa, 1982/1, p. 20; M. Henss, King Srong btan sGam po Revisited: The royal statues in the Potala Palace and in the Jokhang at Lhasa. Problems of historical and stylistic evidence. Essays on the International Conference on Tibet Archaeology and Art, Beijing 2002. Chengdu 2004, p.128-171.

An additional support for this chronology would be the fine brass image of king Songtsen Gampo (312D-E) and some related figures in the Potala Palace, tentatively, yet apparently correctly dated by von Schroeder to the 14th century, a period for which, as I believe, the characteristic Yuan-style dragon design and the "Faltenstil" of the robe both give further support.[175] Such metal images may have served as models for the royal clay statues in the Jokhang.

The attribution of a group of twelve metal images to the "Zhang Zhung Kingdom of Western Tibet" **(figs. 104, 105),** presented as a sub-chapter of the Tibetan Imperial Period of ca. 600-842 AD (vol.II, p.771-791) comes, as the author rightly says, as a major surprise.

Whatever has been written so far on Zhang Zhung in terms of territorial, historical, religious and archaeological identity, it did not contribute much to outline a firm cultural profile of this rather legendary, unverified kingdom to the West of the Central Regions (dbUs and gTsang) of Tibet, by which it was conquered towards the middle of the 7th century and became fully integrated into the Tibetan empire during the following decades. Thus there was no more "Kingdom of Zhang Zhung" for the period von Schroeder attributes the statues of this chapter!

No artefacts or other safe archaeological data have ever come to light to establish a Zhang Zhung identity. Not a single object of such a provenance was found during Guiseppe Tucci's exploratory travels in western Tibet in the 1930s, in the course of the Chinese excavations at Tsa-

[175] Compare also the garment design of 312C, which can be similarly found on fabric borders of Yuan dynasty kesi or embroidered thangkas. To the same group of ca. 14th century metal sculptures (compare also BST 305-306) may also belong 221D/E, a "princely donor depicted as Amitayus (?)" (BST: 11th /12th century), provided that it was not an earlier proto-type analogous to some princely donors in the late 11th century wall-paintings at Drathang monastery.

parang in the1980s, nor during John Vincent Bellezza's thorough field research in the western Changthang plains in the 1990.[176]

Any other existing Buddhist art in the greater area of western Tibet is limited to provincial Kashmir style rock-carvings of ca. 8th to 10th century in Ladakh, Lahaul-Spiti and Gilgit-Baltistan. With a complete lack of archaeological finds, the historical evidence for an alleged "Zhang Zhung art" remains at least vague. If we accept that "Yang t'ung", as described by the Chinese pilgrim Hui Zhao (Hui Ch'ao) in 726, situated "to the north-east of Kashmir", is identical with Zhang Zhung, the geographical determination would lead us - different from the "Kingdom of Great P'o lu (Bolor)" mentioned in the same passage - to a cultural no-man's land, where not even a simple place-name indicates a Buddhist site or "centre" of a presumed "Zhang Zhung Kingdom".

By accepting the existence of a "Zhang Zhung art", this kingdom would have been buddhisised by the new rulers from the Yarlung dynasty, but this is unlikely an assumption, given that the new faith, which became an acknowledged official power in central Tibet only during the second half of the 8th century, had a substantial impact in far-away western provinces at the same time or earlier. However Buddhism in the westernmost Himalayan borderlands at that period came from the West, a fact which can be supported indeed by the stylistic physiognomy of most of the "Zhang Zhung" statues as claimed in BST. According to von Schroeder this discrepancy - patrons from the East and images with a stylistic provenance from the West - could be explained by the probable fact that the latter may have been commissioned by the Zhang Zhung rulers from outside, i.e. from "western" artists, who were trained in the style of the Greater Kashmir Gilgit area.

Such a theory however overlooks that some "Zhang Zhung images" like 184 or 189A-C do not fit into the Greater Kashmir style pattern and rather recall several statues of the Yarlung dynasty group, which, as

[176] See The Site of the Ancient Guge Kingdom, ed. by The Administrative Commitee of Archaeology of the TAR, Beijing, 1991; J. V. Bellezza, Antiquities of Northern Tibet, Delhi 2001; S. Hummel, On Zhang Zhung, Dharamsala, 2000.

established in BST, is ultimately too small and too heterogenous that there would be no more "space" for further additions from among the early material. On the other hand, it may underestimate the stylistic variety and the provincial derivatives among the Buddhist sculptures from such a large "Greater Kashmir" area (like the Kashmir Valley, Swat and the Afghan borderlands, Gilgit, Ladakh, or Spiti) if one excludes those images, which do "not fit into the general patterns" of these regions.

Thus, I cannot see the twelve so-called "Zhang Zhung statues" as an isolated group. A major obstacle for a Zhang Zhung provenance or stylistic identity is the fact that the latter is completely created by negative factors rather than positive arguments in relation to any single safely attributable object. And what would be, in regard to Buddhist iconography of almost the entire group (183-188) and beyond Hui Zhao's account of the phantom land of Yang t'ung[177], the Buddhist evidence for the Zhang Zhung Kingdom at a period before the Buddhist kingdom of Guge, where according to historical texts, the state religion under the 33 kings was Bon, prior to annexation by Tibet?

Bon seems to have remained the cultural driving force and coexisted along with the new faith still during the Yarlung dynasty period. To introduce a "Buddhist Kingdom of Zhang Zhung" hardly meets the actual situation in the far West, since Buddhism seems to have reached, at least from central Tibet, these territories only at a time when Zhang Zhung was no longer a kingdom of its own.

Technical evidence also does not favour a Zhang Zhung art hypothesis. The sheer fact that most of the statues are made of brass and thus indicative of probably a "western" origin, is not acceptable. The three copper images of the "Zhang Zhung group" however cannot support such material - based geographical attributions and instead points to a Nepalo-Tibetan origin, although this remains questionable as well, since

[177] Where exactly or approximately "some Buddhist activities in Western Tibet from at least the late 7th until the middle of 9th century" (BST, p.773) can be located, remains however enigmatic.

copper is also known from Kashmir (see Hui Zhao's account of 726). And "different kinds of iconographic influences and development" (BST, p.774) can be regarded as general characteristics of earliest Tibetan art, or an indication that these images belong to very different traditions instead, as postulated in BST, to the Zhang Zhung Kingdom of western Tibet.

The whole Zhang Zhung issue of Buddhist metal images does not go beyond an interesting idea. Patrons and production centres, provenance and stylistic profiles appear as abstract as the geographical and cultural identity of the Zhang Zhung Kingdom itself. Quite naturally von Schroeder has no other choice than to make his own hypothesis even more complicated and less clear-cut when suggesting an origin "from the Tibetan dominions in the Western parts of Central Asia" (BST, 185A-B).

What is then left for "Zhang Zhung" except being a kingdom in search of its location between Kailash and Karakorum, and its images imported somewhere from "the West of Central Asia"? And what is the use of the "facial characteristics" for an attribution to Zhang Zhung, when they are completely overpainted by a later cold-gilding (an essential limitation to the physiognomical identity of many sculptures documented in BST!)? From my point of view there is no convincing way to separate this material from the greater Swat, Kashmir, Gilgit and Hindu Koosh areas, whose artistic variety would be, seen from an "Zhang Zhung eye-view", most certainly underestimated. I have little doubt that similar sculptures can be found among the material from Baltistan to Swat, like for example rock-carved bodhisattvas in the Swat area, with even comparable facial feature.[178]

Is there not a higher probability of considering the Tibetan dominions at the edge of those territories and very much in the area to which the stylistic essentials of the so-called Zhang Zhung images must be traced

[178] Compare BST 185C and 187C with figs.1,2 in: Anna Filigenzi, "Buddhist Rock Sculptures in Swat, North West Pakistan". South Asian Archaeology, Delhi, 1995, vol. 2, p. 625-635.

back? For example, they could be the little known or studied "Bolorian Tibet", i.e. the greater area of Bolor (including today's Baltistan), or, as part of the Indo-Iranian borderlands, Little Bolor (Tib. Bru zha) conquered by the Tibetans in 735. These could be possible places for the statues, which do not really fit into usually accepted patterns of "Kashmir and beyond", like for example the bodhisattvas 185A/B and 185C-E, or the Saraswati 188A-C? In these parts of the Tibetan empire since ca. 678 and ca.720 AD respectively, Buddhism was flourishing as the dominant religion until the 10th century. And in regard to geography and cultural data, we are on much safer ground here than in "Zhang Zhung"!

In all historical texts Zhang Zhung is the name of a Bon Kingdom or confederation believed to have existed in western and northern Tibet, apparently covering the border areas up to the westernmost gTsang, around present Lhatse county. It remains however somewhat strange that one cannot find a single image among the twelve "Zhang Zhung statues" which can be labelled as non-Buddhist or Bon[179], although I am aware of the difficulty to define a pre-or non-Buddhist iconography for that early period at all.

Only three early Bon sculptures of ca. 13th and 14th century are documented in BST (299 B,C,D), which may be explained by the fact that the collected material comes exclusively from Buddhist monasteries, although the few surviving ancient sculptures in present Bon monasteries of central and southern Tibet would hardly make a substantial addition.

The largest chapter of the two volumes (p.53-209) refers to the "Greater Area of Kashmir, Gilgit, and sPu rangs Gu ge" from 7th to 12th century. This broad geographical spectrum covers the whole material from Swat and Kashmir, the western Himalayas (Ladakh,

[179] What does the "early non-Buddhist Bon cult of Indian origin" (p.772) mean? This contradictory claim goes obviously back to David Snellgrove's Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, London, 1987, p. 391, 400-405, 473, where "Bon" is partially understood as a sort of transformed and unorthodox Buddhism originating in lndia! In this case however the characterisation of Bon as "non-Buddhist" would not be logical.

Spiti, and adjacent regions), and western Tibet (Guge, Purang). A separate and largely artificial category of "Kashmir or Western Tibet" can be avoided by summarising practically all statuary from these areas into styles such as "Kashmir Schools in Western Tibet", *kha che lugs*, the style derived from Kashmir, as seen from a Tibetan perspective.[180]

This very general label however does not help much to determine - as far as it would be possible - specific characteristics for a "pure" Kashmir work, be it made in Kashmir proper and brought to Tibet (like, for example, the Kha tse bodhisattva (vol.I, fig.II-5)[181], or be it produced by a Kashmiri artist (or from Himachal Pradesh) in western Tibet as claimed by von Schroeder for nearly all sculptures of the "Kashmir Schools in Western Tibet" in this chapter, or be it for identifying specific elements of a western Tibetan stylistic tradition that means to establish certain criteria of local styles in Guge, Spiti, Ladakh and beyond (more or less closely based on Kashmir art conventions). However even this would remain largely guesswork and in regard to the mobility of the artists and ateliers, von Schroeder (p. 76) rightly questions the value of geographical attributions in the western Tibetan realm and gives priority to the style according to which an artist is trained, instead of to the place where an image was produced.

By attributing all statues after the 8th century to the "Kashmir Schools in Western Tibet" the author gives the impression that there was no more

180 See for a more detailed discussion of the Kashmir-Western Tibet problem in art history Michael Henss, "Buddhist Metal Images of Western Tibet, ca.1000-1500 A.D. Historical Evidence, Stylistic Considerations, Modern Myths". The Tibet Journal (ed. by Erberto Lo Bue), vol. XXVII, no. 314, 2002, p. 23-82.

181 The life-size masterpiece, photographed by Thomas Pritzker (Chicago) at its original site mKhar rtse (Tholing district, Nga ri, Province) in 1999, and also published in Huo Wei Li Yongxian, The Buddhist Artin Western Tibet, Beijing, 2001, pl. 276, is identified in BST (p.70) with a statue commissioned by Rin chen bzang po in 998 during his stay in Kashmir, which also confirms the date of this master's first journey to the West of ca. 987-1000, respectively his return to Guge in 999/1000 (BST, p.138: in 985) as suggested by Luciano Petech (in Klimburg-Salter, 1997, op.cit., p. 234).

art production in Kashmir itself during the following centuries except "Kashmir in exile"![182]

Thus the "disadvantage" and the problem of the "Kashmir Schools in Western Tibet" is simply the probable fact that, although a great deal of the Kashmiri-style images may well have come from Guge and beyond, too many statues are being attributed in BST to western Tibetan ateliers (whose artistic capacity and potential might be slightly overestimated!), and that no attempt is being made to indicate differences between an artist from Kashmir and from Tibet, or to consider the existence of more modestly designed works from Kashmir proper.[183]

The very complex reality of the Kashmir-western Tibetan art production seems to resist the art historian's ambition of establishing groups and criteria for everything. The artist usually follows, when abroad and working for foreign patrons, his own indigenous style and aesthetic traditions, while on the other hand he may incorporate specific characteristics.[184] Only from this background one can follow (but hardly accept, despite the fact that this chapter runs under India in vol.I) von Schroeder's restriction to those sculptures "which were made by Indian artists for the sPurangs Gu ge kingdom between about 950 and 1150" (p. 68). However can the amazing stylistic variety of all these images[185] be explained simply by different origins and local artistic traditions among the artists from Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh?

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[182] Only three ca. 10th or 11th century images of modest quality are labelled as "Kashmir" (53A-E), but an which grounds, compared with many similar "Kashmir Schools in Western Tibet" statues in BST, remains unclear!

[183] Which criteria for example would help to characterise 31B/C, 44A/B, 45C, as "Kashmir" or (as labelled in BST) as "Kashmir Schools in Western Tibet"? Or by which arguments is 35A/B classified as "Kashmir" and the very similar images 32A/B, 33, 34A/B, and 34C/D as "Kashmir Schools"?

[184] See for similar suggestions by the author with regard to the Pala Indian-Tibetan issue, BST 282A, 284D, 286D.

[185] 30A-C, 31A-C, 37A-C, 38A-C, 39C-E, 40A-C, 41B-E, 42A/B, 43C-E, 44B, 45C-E, 46B, 47B/C.

I cannot see any conclusive reasons for attributing 43C-E, 46B, or 47C to an Indian artist and would even rule out a western Tibetan origin for 46B and 47C due to the complete lack of adequate stylistic criteria. And where were the statues of the "Kashmir Schools in Western Tibet" manufactured, presumably by Tibetans, of which one would have expected at least an author's choice?[186]

The striking fact that by far the majority of the pre 11th century sculptures collected in BST comes from the Greater Kashmir area, the primary source of Buddhist inspiration at the time, is convincingly explained by the dominant role of Buddhism between the Swat, Kashmir, and Gilgit valleys, and by the Tibetan suzerainty over the border regions along the Hindu Koosh and Karakorum during the 8th century.[187] Doubtless the great Buddhist revival during the 11th century in Guge (where by then a reservoir of already trained and highly skilful Kashmiri and other foreign artists from the western Himalayas, Nepal, and even central India[188] provided the many new shrines with magnificent images), introduced and inspired a "Second Diffusion" of Buddhist statues in the Central Regions as well. Here, in the rising heartland of Buddhist Tibet, the refined metal casting of sacred images had almost no indigenous tradition at the turn of the millenium. So it was only natural that foreign masterworks and artists (?) such as from Kashmir and western Tibet were well-received, although compared with images from Nepal

[186] In spite of the author's limitation to western Tibetan statues made by Indian artists (p. 68) five images are presented as "Western Tibet", apparently meant as being made by Tibetans (43A/B, 66A-E).

[187] It cannot be ruled out that for good historical reasons some of the early 7th and 8th century statues from Kashmir and Gilgit like for example the large seated Maitreya in the Jokhang, 52A-F (published already, including the main part of its inscription, in Henss 1996, op.cit., p. 61, fig. 9, "overlooked" by von Schroeder) came to Tibet already during the 8th century.

[188] The main statue in the bar khang of the Tho ling gSer khang was reportedly made there by an artist from Magadha; R.Vitali, The Kingdoms of Gu-ge Pu-hrang, Dharamsala, 1996, p.312f.

and eastern India, they did not have any notable stylistic influence on the sculpture in Central Regions.

The latter phenomenon may be explained by the generally greater number of Indian and Nepalese artists working in Tibet (because of the much closer distances) in a more regular and effective cultural South-North connection compared with the West-East contacts (and the rather isolated geographical position of the Guge-Purang kingdoms!). It can also be explained by the sheer chronological fact that Indo-Nepalese art traditions had a much more significant continous influence on the Central Regions during the formative period of Tibetan art of the 11th through 13th centuries than the mostly earlier Kashmiri and western Tibetan statues of ca. 8th to 11th or 12th centuries. The impact of Kashmir art upon western Tibet finds a parallel only in the Pala-Indian dominated Tibetan sculptures and paintings of the 11th-13th centuries. However with regard to the different historical and geographical conditions and crossroads it was less exclusive and concentrated.

What was Buddhist sculpture alike in western Tibet after the more or less completely Kashmir-style dominated production (including some occasional works of 'visiting' Nepalese and east Indian artists) of the 11th and 12th centuries?[189]

The pursuant political changes and cultural decline in the entire Guge and Purang area are reflected by the art production, which became more and more provincial in the 13th and 14th centuries, moulded by regional styles from western Nepal and especially influenced by the art traditions from the Central Regions of Tibet. This "international style" in its western Tibetan version between Alchi and Tholing (more easily identified with wall-paintings and thangkas than for metal images), had largely absorbed and eliminated the earlier western Tibetan art profile. Consequently any attribution of Tibetan sculptures (no more in situ) dating to ca. 1200-1450 to Guge or to the western Himalayas has turned out to be very speculative. Whether a Buddha Vajrāsana of a distinctive Pala style

[189] See for a more detailed discussion Henss 2002, op.cit.

was cast in a western Himalayan workshop only because of its Śāradā inscription (in my understanding not a definetive proof for such a provenance) as claimed in BST (307A) remains doubtful. The lack of any Kashmir-western Tibetan style elements for this 12th century brass image and some other related statues[190] does not support such a hypothesis. A direct connection from eastern India to central Tibet would be preferable.

Twenty years ago von Schroeder created the myth of "Western Tibetan bronzes" in his first book, referring to a large group of mostly 14th century images of a specific tathāgata type **(fig. 106, see also fig. 16, and fig 129),** although without convincing arguments for this theory.[191]

Copied in countless other publications, these "Western Tibetan" statues are categorised now in BST simply under "Tibetan monastic period".[192] It is remarkable that the author does not seek to clarify what considerable confusion this has caused. Instead, an anonymous responsibility for all these wrongly identified images is preferred, which were "alternately attributed by some scholars (!) exclusively to Western Tibet or exclusively to Central Tibet by other writers" (p. 82). The fact that even von Schroeder's thorough research did not succeed in identifying specific casting centres except those at some major sites like Lhasa ("at the foot of the Potala palace"), Gyantse and Tashi Lhünpo monasteries, and in the Lho brag, Lho kha and Yar lung regions in southern central Tibet

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[190] Compare metal images of this type in U.von Schroeder, Indo-Tibetan Bronzes, Hong Kong, 1981, 38A/F; Marcel Nies, Spirit of Compassion, Antwerp, 1995, p. 38f; Zhongguo Zangchuan Fujiao Jintong Zaoxiang Yishi (The Art of Tibetan Buddhist Gilt Metal Statues in China, 2 vols., Beijing, 2001, vol.1, no.73.

[191] Von Schroeder 1981, op.cit., p. 156,193. See for another view Henss, 1996, p. 62-63, and for a more detailed discussion Henss 2002, op.cit.

[192] BST 313A, 314C, 315A-E, 316A-C, 317E, 318B-E. Same "traces" of this western Tibetan myth can be still found in BST, like for example with 297C, a modest Tibetan casting in the Pala style manner without distinctive elements of an origin in the western Himalayas, which one may better add to similar groups of provincial Indo-Tibetan schools of the 11th and 12th century, like for example 294E-298D.

(p. 699), this allows not more than a general attribution of the "tathāgata type" sculptures to the Central Regions of Tibet. Although metal statues related to western Tibet of subsequent periods are announced for chapter XVIII, not a single one can be convincingly presented here since they simply do not exist in Tibetan monastic collections, except in 15th and 16th century Tsaparang and beyond, a chapter on Tibetan statuary of its own, which is outside of the reviewed book **(fig. 129).**

One of the many values of BST lies in the precise iconographic identifications of the individual objects or at least in the attempt to describe and determine the images according to the best possible standard of our present knowledge. Numerous entries include detailed iconographic discussions, like for example on the crowned Buddha (p. 50, 110, 144, 246, 264), on the seated Buddha Maitreya or Shakyamuni in bhadrāsana posture (pls. 25A-E, 255D, 258A, etc.), or on the Buddha Vajrāsana as the often more correct alternative to the usually "Akṣobhya" Buddha with the vajra in front (pls. 255E, 271D, 307A and B, etc.).

Bibliographies should be compiled in my understanding with concrete reference to the book to which they are added, and not as blown-up "lists on Tibetan art". Around 400 (!) entries of the Western language bibliography in BST do not show a specific relation to the subject matter, either in text or in illustration, and many more are without any reference to the individual chapters and descriptions of the objects. Authors such as for example Casey-Singer, Goepper, Hummel, Jackson, Klimburg-Salter, Mitra, Norbu, Pal, Reynolds, Richardson, Stearns, Stoddard, Tanaka, or Tsultem, turn up with their complete publications, no matter if they are specifically connected with BST or not. One may forgive amateur-writers the inclusion of titles like Allen's *Search of Shangrila*, Demeter's *Kailash*, or Van Strydonck's *Bhutan* picture album, but wonders what a professional author has found for BSTin Berger's *Origin of the Needle-looping in Tibet*, in Helmut Neumann's contributions on the wall- paintings in Mustang and Guge, or in the *Tibetan Medical Thangkas*? And what is the sense to list up my own book (1981) without having gone through it, just to notice otherwise that the largest 26-metre

tall Maitreya statue at Tashi Lhünpo monastery was manufactured in 1914-16 instead of "1461" (fig. XVI-1, p. 994).[193]

I may have overlooked in 1344 pages a hitherto undiscovered connection between Buddhist sculptures of Sri Lanka and in Tibet or some yet unexplored sources in ancient non-Buddhist Indian texts, but I cannot find a reason to include titles by Leopold and Ulrich von Schroeder except for the benefit of the author's ego. At least about ten entries in the Chinese language bibliography (referring to Beijing, Dunhuang, Kumbum and Labrang monasteries, and Wutaishan) seem to be superfluous for BST, and references to Japanese secondary sources like *Daizo* or *Nanjio* remain a mystery for further investigation. To the Tibetan language bibliography one may add a text of the Drigung school founder 'Jig rten mGon po (1143-1217) on metal images, especially since nineteen statues in this principal monastery are documented in BST[194], or a *Treatise on the Essential Knowledge of Crafts* with a section on Tibetan metalcraft techniques by the scholar 'Jam mgon 'ju Mi pham rGya mtsho (1846-1912), the only so far available Tibetan text on this subject except the well-known *Tibetan Classification of Buddhist lmages According to their Style* as published by Guiseppe Tucci in 1959.[195]

Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet, a groundbreaking corpus of cultural relics in present-day Tibet and a masterful combination of field research and academic scholarship, is doubtlessly more than just the latest addition to this survey on significant research works on art and architecture in Tibet. This stupendous reference work has come like a modern gter ma,

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193 See Henss 1981, op.cit., p. 227. The date of 1461 refers to the still well-preserved 11 metres high gilt copper Maitreya in the three-storey separate shrine in the western section of the main assembly hall, designed by sNar thang pa dpon po Byang rin (see also Jackson 1996, op.cit., p. 98f.).

194 The Collected Writings [gSung 'bum] of 'Brigung Chos rje 'Jig rten mGon po Rin chen dpal, Delhi, 1969/71, vol.II, p. 10-13 (in Tibetan).

195 Chandra L. Reedy, "A Tibetan text an metalworking from the collected writings of 'Ju Mi-Pham", Historical Metallurgy, vol. 25, no.1, 1991, p. 37-46.

a 'treasure' book, as a mine of information and inspiration. Its enormous amount of material and insight could be reviewed here only in some aspects. And many more questions and answers than we have referred to in these comments will keep us busy, as collectors or connoisseurs, as students of Buddhist sculpture or as advanced lovers of Tibetan art.

Addendum

Since the publication of my review of Ulrich von Schroeder's „Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet (2001) in ORIENTAL ART in 2003, only a few smaller studies have contributed to our knowledge in the field.

In her *"Observations on the Ancient Wood Carvings"* in the Lhasa Tsuglagkhang (2004) Amy Heller discusses the probable literary sources for the narrative relief cycles on the doorway lintels of the early chapels in the inner Jo khang. A principal text source, so Heller, would have been here the Gaṅḍadavyūha sūtra, whose 70 chapters are describing in detail the encounters of the young boy Sudhana with 53 gods and sages, among them Manjushri, Maitreya, Avalokiteshvara and Shiva, on his pilgrimage to Supreme Enlightenment and Ultimate Truth. This "pilgrim's guide to Buddhism" was meant to serve as an exemplum of a believer's spiritual progress on his gradual path to Buddhahood. As the last and longest section of the very popular Avataṃsaka sūtra, which was compiled in Khotan and translated into Chinese for the first time in the early 5th century, the Gaṅḍadavyūha sūtra must have become known in Tibet via the Buddhist monastic centers along the southern and northern Silk Routes during the 7th or 8th centuries.[196] However one can hardly identify so far any narrative scenery of the Jokhang carvings with these texts.

[196] Heller 2004, who associates this sûtra for the Jokhang carvings even with the royal Vairocana cult in early Tibet, however without concrete and convincing references to the lintel carvings. What Heller relates to the Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra (fig. 9), can be more likely identified as a jātaka tale (BST, 143 I). And what she identifies as a "mahā-siddha" (fig.11), is in fact a Vajrapuruṣa, "personified vajra", BST, 135 F), whose cult was popular in Nepal at about the same period.

Von Schroeder interprets the depicted episodes, at least some of them, probably more convincingly as (unidentifiable) jātaka tales or as stories from the avadānas, legendary accounts of the great deeds and achievements of the Buddha and Buddhist saints, such as for example the Story of the Hare (pls.134 G-I). The latter panels would be according to Heller "apparently related to the Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra, the Sutra of the Meditation on Amitayus, which however exists only in a 5th century Chinese translation and whose popularity among Nepalese artisans working in early imperial Tibet seems to be questionable. And how can the Gaṅḍadavyūha sūtra have served as a textual basis when, as Heller says herself, "the popularity of this text in Nepal cannot be documented earlier than the late 11th or early 12th century"? There is no doubt that both, as von Schroeder rightly claims (unfortunately without giving a plan to locate the carved panels more easily), style and iconography of the sculptural cycles indicate a Nepalese workshop of the initial construction phase in the 7th or 8th century.

How difficult it ever may be, a more detailed research on the iconographic program of the ancient Jokhang carvings remains a major desideratum. According to Amy Heller, whose theory of an original residential core tower – which would have been transformed in the first half of the 8th century into the actual Jo khang sanctuary – I have questioned already at the first presentation of her paper in 2003 (IATS Conference, Leiden), the doorway carvings of the eight (not ten) lateral chapels in the ground and first upper floor date to "post-780 to 835".[197] Not less speculative and partly contradictory is Heller's hypothesis ("based"on which evidence?), whereafter all four central chapels of the north and south sections with early carvings on both ground floor and first storey would belong to a "reconstruction" of around 1050.

While despite all missing textual or archaeological evidence an original residential structure at the Jokhang site may not be totally ruled out (like

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[197] Doubts about Amy Heller's "from tower to temple" theory were also forwarded by Slusser 2005 and A.Alexander, The Lhasa Jokhang – is the world's oldest timber frame building in Tibet? www-webjournal.unior.it, vol.1, 2006, p.123-154.

for the contemporary Khra 'brug temple at modern Tsethang), the present vihāra plan of the Jokhang with the northern, southern and eastern lateral chapels on the ground floor and at least the eastern section on the upper floor goes back with much probabiliy to the Songtsen Gampo era of the mid-7th century.[198] This early date taken up by von Schroeder (p.407-431) is not only confirmed by two separately radiocarbon-tested wooden beams[199], but also supported by various contemporary and stylistically closely related relief sculptures in the Kathmandu Valley dating to the ca. 7th century, which were the direct inspirations for the Nepalese ateliers in Lhasa.

Neither von Schroeder nor I have noticed in situ that some lintels would comprise some panels, "which could be moved to other locations, substituted, replaced or renovated" to allow, so Heller, later additions during the reconstruction works in the 11th century. Which of the twenty panels reproduced in BST would then be a later replacement? Not a single of all these reliefs can be safely identified as a later addition copied presumably some 400 (!) years after the other carvings.

A seventh or eighth century date for the doorway carvings is further proved by the four atlant figures at the base of the tall pillars in the eastern Jokhang section, which are pure Gupta style images produced after equivalent prototypes in Nepalese Licchavi sculpture. These pillar shaft decorations date without doubt to the early foundation period (BST, vol.I, fig.VI, 7-10: "probably 7th century"). And what might have been partially recarved, is certainly not "a later replacement" (BST, vol.I, fig.VI-10). Have any contemporary Tibetan p a i n t i n g s survived from the monarchic period of the 7th to 9th century? The early murals in the Lhasa Jokhang, which were removed in the upper floor in 1985 and which are practically lost since then, were attributed by some scho-

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198 For a more detailed discussion of the early architectural history and plan of the Jokhang see Alexander 2006, op.cit., p.125, and Henss forthcoming, ch.I.3.

199 For the radiocarbon-tested datings of the 1990s see A.Alexander, The Temples of Lhasa. Chicago 2005, p.54; Alexander 2006, op.cit.; and Henss forthcoming, ch.I.3.

lars to the foundation period of this temple. For predominantly stylistic reasons, which cannot be decribed here in full detail, they must however date very probably to the era of the first comprehensive renovation in the 11th century, when the art of Pala India had been alrady introduced to Tibet. Except a painted manuscript cover in a private Chicago collection, whose figural style can be compared with the wellknown Tibetan style silk paintings from Dunhuang (early 9th century) the only other paintings from Tibet of that period are two cloth fragments of a standing monk in a London private property. All appear to predate clearly by style the now largely lost Jokhang murals, while the London paṭas may be regarded as the only surviving examplesof early Tibetan monumental painting of the ca. 8th century, without any distinctive Pala Indian, Nepalese or Silk Road connection **(fig. 130).**

In my own contribution on "King Srong btsan sGam po revisited" (2004)[200] I came back once more to the portrait statues of King Songtsen Gampo and his retinue in the Lhasa Jokhang and in the Potala Palace by presenting a more comprehensive and precise historical and textual as well as iconographic and stylistic profile of these popular clay images. – In the early historical period of Tibet, usually known as sPu rgyal or "Yar lung dynasty", the pre-Buddhist idea of divine kingship and of the heavenly origin of the Tibetan kings (Songtsen Gampo as "son of the gods", lha sras; Dunhuang text, 8th century) merged in the foreign notion of a god-incarnate, which was introduced from India during the 8th century. The royal epithet of a dharmarāja-cakravartin, "King of the [Buddhist] Law and Wheel-turning Universal Monarch", is part of an inscription on a late 8th century rdo ring pillar at the imperial burial site in the Yarlung Valley ('Phyong rgyas).

Although the concept of a bodhisattva king, "the divinly manifested grand Bodhisattva", and of King Songtsen Gampo as a manifestation of Avalokiteshvara was literally documented already since the time of King Trisong Detsen (Khri srong lDe btsan, r.755-97; bronze bell at bSam yas from ca.780, Jo khang rDo ring of 821/22), individual and monumental

[200] Cf. Henss 2004, p.138ff.

representations of "Avalokiteshvara in form of a king" (Blue Annals, 1478/81) or of Songtsen Gampo as the "Great Compassionate Avalokiteshvara" (Mani bKa' bum, 12th century) did apparently not exist before the 14th century.[201] The idea of a bodhisattva-king established during the monarchic period was closely related to the contemporary royal Avalokiteshvara cult (sBa 'bzhed chronicle). While Arya ('Phags pa) Avalokiteshvara was obviously recognized as Lord of the dMar po ri already in the 8th century, his human incarnation, the Tibetan king (and later on the Dalai Lama), was possibly not regarded retrospectively its principal wordly resident on the Potala hill before the 14th century.

Around or after 1328 Tshalpa Tripön Mönlam Dorje ('Tshal pa khri dpon sMon lam rDor rje, 1284-1346, r.1304-36), the actual ruler of Lhasa and known for his promotion of a Tibetan national revival (and thus of a kind of Songtsen Gampo cult), commissioned images of King Songtsen Gampo and his wives, which were probably identical with those clay statues once installed in the southern ground-floor section of the Jokhang (no more extant).[202] **(fig. 13)** These royal effigies dating to the second quarter of the 14th century may have served as prototypes for two similar sculptural groups on the western ground-floor (early 15th century?) and in the central chapel on the upper floor's western wing (before or around 1645), and also for similar sculptures in the "Dharma King Meditation Cave" (Chos rgyal sGru phug) of the Potala Palace.[203]

Do the Potala statues belong to the 7th, 14th or to the 17th century? An unusually wide range indeed when discussing some of the most

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[201] According to the textual tradition a sandalwood effigy (sku dra) covered with silver is said to have existed at 8th century Samye monastery, cf. Henss forthcoming, CH.VI,7.1.

[202] Text source: Tshal Gung thang dKar chag (1782), cf. P. Sorensen / G.Hazod, Rulers on the Celestial Plain. Ecclesiastic and Secular Hegemony in Medieval Tibet. A Study of Tshal Gung thang, 2 vols. Wien 2007, p.199. See also Henss 2004, p.138ff. with more details on the historical attribution of the three royal image groups in the Jokhang,of which the statues on the upper floor could be associated with a donation mentioned in the dKar chag of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1645).

[203] Cf. Henss 2004, p.145-151, with more details on the pre-17th century building history of the dMar po ri.

wellknown and popular images of Tibet! While for several historical and distinctive stylistic reasons the Potala group must be attributed to the 17th century, this late date may be also supported by the Fifth Dalai Lama's own "secret visions" in 1660, when Avalokiteshvara transformed himself into King Songtsen Gampo to speak to the Great Fifth that he should make an image of that king as a cakravartin like (it existed) in the Lhasa Jokhang.[204]

My study "Is there any 'Anige Style' in Nepalo-Tibetan and Tibeto-Chinese Metal Sculpture of the Sa skya Yuan Period" (2006)[205] was supposed to reconstruct in more detail the presumable sculptural style of the famous Nepalese image-maker Aniko (A ni ko, Chin. Anige, 1245-1306) as well as the probable direct influences on and the reflections in "Nepalo-Tibetan" art between Sakya in 1261 and the Mongol capital at Dadu (today Beijing) until the early 14th century.

Since the actual aesthetic profile of this artist without oeuvre has remained virtually unknown – so far not a single existing statue has been safely attributed to this leading multi-talented master-artisan at the Yuan court – the initial inspiration to establish what might be called the "Aniko style" in the second half of the 13th century came from a group of small size copper images of superb quality, which all are characterised by a very similar and highly refined Pala-influenced figural

[204] For the text source see S.Karmay, Secret Visions of the Fifth Dalai Lama. The Gold Manuscript in the Fournier Collection Musée Guimet Paris, London 1988, p.48. In his dKar chag from 1645 the Fifth Dalai Lama mentions however some images of Songtsen Gampo and his retinue in an "assembly hall (gtsug lag khang) being located in the center of the [former] palace of the king of Tibet"; cf. A. Grünwedel, Die Tempel von Lhasa. Heidelberg 1919, p.73, and for another translation in Three dKar chag, Delhi 1970, p.41. The exact identity of these no more existing statues (from 1645?) remains unclear. Or does the present Chos rGyal lha khang (or "Dharma King Meditation Cave") correspond to the "gtsug lag khang" mentioned in the Fifth Dalai Lama's text? And were in this case the presumably 14th century royal statues replaced or reworked in the 1640s?

[205] Paper given at the Third International Conference on Tibetan Archaeology and Art, Beijing 2006 (summary in the Abstracts), and published under the same title in Chinese in: The Palace Museum Journal, 5/2007, p.51-66, and in English in the Proceedings, 2008 (forthcoming). See on Aniko also Anning Jing 1994.

style not found among "pure" Kathmandu Valley sculpture and not in Tibet at that period.

On the way to establish this group of basically Newar-inspired statuettes a small Tara "painting" in slit tapestry technique (kesi) in the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, has been instrumental[206], a specifically precious medium, which was in high esteem at the Aniko workshops of the distictive **(fig. 125)** Tibetan-Buddhist milieu at the Mongol court. With much probalitity this kesi was produced at or for the Yuan court during the later 13th century and thus represents, at least in a wider range, the Aniko art tradition as it was prevalent in the imperial ateliers at around 1300.

The Green Tara at San Francisco reflects clearly the Newar art tradition in Tibet, which is illustrated in the best way by one of the finest paintings to exist, the Green Tara in the Cleveland Museum of Art. With good arguments the Cleveland Tara has been associated with and even attributed to Aniko[207] and it was very probably painted in the Sakya milieu when in 1261/62 Aniko stayed at this then most important monastery under Yuan souvereignty. Both, the woven and the painted Tara can be well compared with some very similar copper images of our "Aniko group" such as a Green Tara in the Potala Palace **(figs. 98, 99, 100)**, and two in composition and quality extraordinary Vajrapani statuettes in the Philadelphia and Lhasa museums, or four images of Avalokiteshvara Padmapani.[208]

In view of their stylistic characteristics and their art historical position the Cleveland and San Francisco Taras as well as some of these copper

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[206] Cf. Henss 2007, ill.p.59, and in: Latter Days of the Law. Images of Chinese Buddhism 850-1850, ed.by M.Weidner, Honolulu 1994, pl.5 ("Xixia Kingdom, early 13th century".

[207] See Kossak in Kossak/Casey Singer 1998, no.37. According to the Yuan Annals (ch.203) Aniko said to Khubilai Khan upon his arrival at the Mongol court (in late 1262) "that he had accomplished the task assigned to him at Sa skya in two years (1261-1262)", Vitali 1990, p.104.

[208] Cf. Henss 2007, op.cit., ill.p. 59,57,61-63.

images may have been produced by Aniko or his atelier in Sakya in the early 1260s or later on at the Mongol court respectively. – This group of fine metal images seems to reconstruct and represent the profile of the lost Aniko oeuvre more precisely than the murals at Shalu monastery of the late 13th and early 14th century, which were associated with Aniko and his workshop at the Yuan court.[209]

In the same paper I have attributed the upper section of the gilt copper prabhā-maṇḍala (rgyab yol) of the Jo bo Shakyamuni in the Lhasa Tsuglagkhang to Aniko **(fig. 96).** The two nāga kings and the garuda on top, both of exceptional quality, follow directly Nepalese antecedents in iconographiy and style. And likewise can the foliate scroll ornament only be compared with 13th century Newari metal and wooden work. Style corresponds to textual records. The dkar chag guide to the Lhasa temples by the Fifth Dalai Lama (1645) documents a "throne-back for the throne (gdan khri rgyab yol) [to the image] of the Jo bo rin po che [to be made] by the Nepali A ni ka gui gung la".[210]

According to the same source the reconstruction of the decorative work was commissioned by Sakya Zangpo (Sa skya bZang po), "the principal of the Sakya leaders" (dPon chen Sa skya'i) and the acting abbot of Sakya from 1260 until ca. 1270. There he must have been Aniko's patron in 1261, shortly before the young Nepalese artisan came to Lhasa. – It is more than likely that the still existing upper part of the Jo bo prabha decoration correponds to the Fifth Dalai Lama's text, almost 400 years after the actual work on this palladium of Buddhist Tibet, and thus it

[209] Vitali 1990, p.103ff.; Henss 2007, and Henss (Beijing Proceedings) 2008.

[210] A. Grünwedel, Die Tempel von Lhasa. Heidelberg 1919, p.56: Sa skya'i dpon chen gyi thog ma Sha kya bzang po bal po'i A ni ka gui gung la bzo bar zus nas… For another Tibetan edition of this text (lHa ldan sprul pa'i gtsug lag khang gi dkar chag shel dkar me long, 1645) by the Fifth Dalai Lama see Three dKarchag, Delhi 1970, p.30 (see also the Lhasa edition 1987): „The foremost Sakya leader Shakya bZangpo offered an especially magnificent throne-back (rgyab yol, Sanskrit: prabha) for the throne of the Jo bo Rinpoche, for which he had asked the Nepali A ni ka gui gung la to make (it)"; Henss 2007 and 2008, op.cit.

would confirm the identification of the only surviving figural metalwork by this genius artist.

The name "A ni ka gui gung la" refers probaly to the imperial title "gung" belonging to the second class nobility in Yuan China, or was eventually associated with gung ma, "leader".[211] A Mongol prince in Lhasa had reportedly donated silver for "an ornate throne" of the Jo bo, executed under the supervision of the same Sa skya bZang po, made "of white silver, supported by lion(s), horse, peacock, and elephant".[212] – Also the characteristic Chinese dougong (chin. "curved brackets supporting square wooden blocks", tib. Phagma dekyog) bracket system of the upper baldaquin (or canopy; bshugs sgrom) architecture surrounding the image must date by mere stylistic criteria to the 13th century and belongs very probably to Aniko's reconstruction in the Jo bo sanctuary **(fig. 97).** The dougong bracket architecture was, however, not a complete novum in Tibet. Earlier proto-types of more archaic design are known from 11th century temples (Shalu, Kyangbu, Nyethang).

While the introduction of the abovementioned "Aniko style group" of copper statuettes (not represented in BST) into Nepalo-Tibetan sculptural arts can be based only on stylistic arguments summarized briefly in this addendum, it may also contribute to the "style school of art history", which in the words of Rob Linrothe "is regularly discredited".[213]

Rob Linrothe, an appreciated scholar not only in Tibetan art, but also well experienced in related Indian and Chinese fields, has written, as far

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[211] S. Ch. Das, Tibetan-English Dictionary, Delhi 1995, p.220.

[212] Dkar chag of the Fifth Dalai Lama, Grünwedel 1919, op.cit., p.56. See also M. Henss, The Jo bo Buddha of Tibet: History, iconography and art. 11th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies (IATS), Königswinter/Bonn 2006, Abstracts. With reference to the same text of the Fifth Dalai Lama it was also suggested by H.Richardson that the "gilded copper screen…was perhaps the work of…Aniko" (The Jo-khang " Cathedral" of Lhasa, in: Essais sur l'Art du Tibet, ed.by A.Macdonald and Yoshiro Imaeda, Paris 1977, p.169), and also by U.von Schroeder, Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet. Hongkong 2001, vol.II, p.1238.

[213] R. Linrothe, Orientations, December 2002, p.52-54.

as I see, the only other more comprehensive résumé of *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*.[214] His well readable contribution came (in late 2002), however, probably due to limited space, more as a synopsis of the book under review than as a detailed discussion of the various research topics presented and challenged by BST. With regard to the intermediate period from the ca. mid-9th until the late 10th century, generally seen as a great cultural gap between the early Imperial Period and the "renaissance" or Second Diffusion of Tibetan Buddhism (phyi dar), Linrothe argues, unfortunately without concrete examples, that von Schroeder would give too much credit to Indian and Newar artists when he discusses miniature stone carvings and in general the revival of sculpture in the late 10th century. In correspondance with BST it should be however evident that all those pre-13th century votif tablets preserved in Tibet and illustrated in BST were produced in Pala India.

Regrettably the sheer unlimited reservoir of Tsha tsha clay miniature images, among them some very early and finely moulded masterpieces, has not yet found proper attention in Tibetan art history, although a few excellent photographic documentations were published in China during the last years.

And where is a single significant statue (or even stone sculpture!) made by a Tibetan artist in the Central Regions between the first half of the 9th and of the 11th century? "Arms and animals" (Linrothe) of the Yarlung dynasty period were hardly a starting point for a grand indigenous tradition of statue-makers, whose formative inspirations came no doubt in the most essential way from India, Nepal, Kashmir, and Central Asia. This is documented by all archaeological evidence.

In a brief remark Linrothe touches quite critically von Schroeder's hypothesis of a separate art tradition in the "Zhang Zhung Kingdom of Western Tibet", which next to the Yarlung dynasty group of early sculp-

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[214] Cf. Linrothe 2002, op.cit. This two-pages report was published when my own review was already in press.

ture in central Tibet would be "the most promising and innovative contributions" in BST: "It makes me uneasy to attribute pieces to an otherwise unknown provenance based on what they are not". A summary indeed of what I have tried to argue and to conclude in my review.

Stylistic characteristics and attributions in BST should be in general, so Linrothe, more explicit. Some specific comparisons, here and there, would have increased the information value of the individual text entries to the images in this ten kilogram opus magnum, indeed a very heavy "touchstone for Tibetan art for years"!

Since von Schroeder's field work in the 1990s access to some prominent sites like the Jokhang and Potala has become more difficult. A similar investigation and photographic documentation for foreign researchers appears to be now, at least at such places of major "public importance" quite impossible. The same problem did exist for Tashi Lhünpo and Sakya monastery (both not documented in BST) already before, whose treasure rooms were so far not opened for scholarly interest or for exhibitions inside or outside China.[215] At Sakya, like Tashi Lhünpo under direct control of the Lhasa and Beijing administration since it has been "opened" to foreign visitors in 1985, admittance to statues and sanctuaries was limited and even reduced during the last years. And the ancient extraordinary manuscript volumes, now moved to a newly constructed traditional style library building, have become even more hidden treasures than before.

Tashi Lhünpo monastery (bKra shis lhun po) was associated in a recent Beijing conference paper by Ma Yunhua (Study on the Sources and Styles of bKra shis li ma Statues collected in the Palace Museum), curator at the Palace Museum, with the inscription "tashi lima" (or zhashi lima) on a silk or paper label attached to many metal images in the Forbidden City since then.[216] Yet what has been misunderstood as a prove-

[215] From both monasteries were given only "minor staff" to the German exhibition "Tibet – Monasteries Open Their Treasure Rooms" in 2006/2007, nos. 28,46,57,84 (see review here), which one would not have missed at all.

[216] Cf. Henss 2006 b, p.597-599.

nance mark, "from Tashi Lhünpo monastery", must be translated simply as "auspicious" or "blessed metal [image]". Tibeto-Chinese statues in the imperial collections are often recorded in Chinese as zhashi lima, a "luck-bringing metal image", for the Tibetan tashi or bkra shis li ma respectively. When the Eighth Dalai Lama had sent gifts to the Qianlong emperor, they were annotated at the court in Chinese as jin zhashi lima wu liang shou fo yizun", "a blessed metal statue of Amitayus was handed over".

And similarly does the Tibetan version of an 18th century four language inscription added to the bottom of a remarkable 15th century gilt copper Shakyamuni, which was presented by the Panchen Lama when meeting the Qianlong emperor at the Qing court in 1780, refer to an "auspicious metal image of Buddha Shakyamuni" (bKra shis li ma Shakya thub pa), thus highlightening the very essence of that icon.[217] Therefore "tashi lima" has nothing to do with Tashi Lhünpo as a production center for those statues, which were inscribed with a kind of good-luck inventory mark upon their arrival at the court. Many of them are very well illustrated and documented in two recently published important reference books on the statues brought from Tibet to China or produced there in the Tibetan style, both compiled by an expert in the field, curator Wang Jiapeng: *Iconography and Styles. Tibetan Statues in the Palace Museum (2 vols., Beijing 2002), and Buddhist Statues of Tibet. The Complete Collection of Treasures in the Palace Museum*, vol.60 (Beijing 2003). –

After BST was published a few more discoveries were made in the field of related Buddhist sculptures in or from Tibet, of which a selection is given here.

A 15 cm high copper statuette of a seated goddess in the National Museum of Bhutan at Paro **(fig. 108, compare with fig. 93)** corresponds exactly to the style of the early "Yarlung group" in BST (p.736-769).[218]

[217] Berger 2003, p.183f.; Henss 2006 b, p.598.

[218] Bartholomew/Johnston 2008, p.146f., and Bartholomew 2008, fig.2: possibly a Himalayan mountain goddess and protecting deity known in Bhutan as „Kongtsedemo" (Kong btsun de mo; catalogue text).

This image datable to the 7th or 8th century is nearly identical with a Sarasvati figure in Mindröl Ling monastery (sMin grol gling; BST, 178 A-C)[219] and was probably brought to Bhutan already during the Tibetan Imperial Period. It is a precious addition to the small corpus of earliest Himalayan metal images as established in BST.

Encouraged by von Schroeder's presentation of a Yarlung dynasty group of earliest Tibetan sculptures (BST, pls.174-182) Amy Heller attributed in her recently published Ashmolean Museum catalogue "*Early Himalayan Art"* (Heller 2008, no.32) a small copper image of a seated Manjushri to the late Tibetan Imperial Period. However, the characteristics, which according to Heller would recall the Licchavi style wooden carvings in the Lhasa Jokhang and indicate a "ca. 9th century" date. The specific forms of the crown blades and the jewelry can be, however, better found in Nepalese and Nepalo-Tibetan statuary of the 10th and 11th century (see BST, pls.124A-C, 157D, 158C, 163A). The specific design of the lotus petals does not exist in pre-11th century Newari and Tibetan art and points out rather to sculptures and paintings of the 11th and 12th century Chidar (phyi dar) period. The reference to some Buddhist rock-carvings in Eastern Tibet appears to be of limited value since those compositions reflect largely the stylistic patterns of esoteric Buddhist art along the northern Silk Road during the 8th and 9th century. And Newar-Tibetan metal casting must be seen primarily within its own artistic traditions of material, style, and technique. The Ashmolean Manjushri does hardly show any distinctive features, which might be convincingly associated with the small corpus of earliest Tibetan and Nepalese copper and silver images, and thus cannot be much better characterised a "Nepalese schools in Tibet, ca. 11th century" (compare for general stylistics of contemporary Nepalese metal sculptures BST, pls.142A, 158A, 160A, 166A).

Like contemporary sculptures from the Kashmir and Swat Valley area these incunabula of Tibetan art were especially favoured a thousand

[219] The Green Tara from Mindröl Ling, 193 C/D, is now in the Lhoka Prefecture Museum at Tsethang, cf. Lhoka in Tibet. Beijing 2000, fig.14.

years later on by the Tenth Karmapa Chöying Dorje (Chos dbyings rDo rje, 1604-74), one of the most extraordinary artists of Buddhist Tibet, whose "drawing of the figures after the fashion of Kashmiri statues" (phyag bris kha che'i li) was already admired in an 18th century Tibetan text.[220] Von Schroeder's identification of ten statues in brass, copper, ivory and wood, all between ca. 15 and 30 cm in height (p.796-819), as copies by this art-experienced hierarch after much earlier prototypes has openend indeed a new chapter in the history of Tibetan art. And several other metal images "in the early style" can now be attributed to Chöying Dorje or to his atelier such as a seated goddess, probably Sarasvati, in the Rietberg Museum Zürich, which has been dated to the ca. 7th or to the 14th century, but must be in fact identified like BST 194 A/B and 194 C/D as a 17th century copy of an a thousand years older prototype in iconography and style.[221]

Once an "oeuvre" of the image-maker-Karmapa has been convincingly set up, several other figurines of Sarasvati, Tara, or Avalokiteshvara may be attributed to Chöying Dorje's manufactory or direct successors (if there were any).[222] – It seems that the "Kashmir Revival Style" (von Schroeder) was largely or exclusively limited to the workshop of Chöying Dorje and its immediate offsprings. How difficult it can be to attribute a statue either to the early Kashmir period or as von Schroeder – probably wrongly – believes (however without compelling arguments) to a much later century, is illustrated by a Shakyamuni image in the Potala Palace, BST 16 D/E.

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[220] Jackson 1996, p. 248. See also the basic observations of this author on Chöying Dorje's painting style, p. 247-258.

[221] Cf. Uhlig 1995, no.88 ("13th/14th century").

[222] Compare for example three Tara figurines at Bodhicitta Gallery, The International Asian Art Fair. New York 1997, Catalogue, p.29 (height: 12,5 cm); Tibetan Art at Spink. London 1992, no.5 (height: 11,5 cm); Spink: Light of Compassion. Buddhist Art from Nepal and Tibet. London 1997, no.24 (height: 17,5 cm). Another Green Tara of this Imperial Period Revival style was the property of Dr. Robert Bigler in 1997 (height: 10,7 cm; unpublished).

Copying early images from Kashmir, Pala India, or from medieval Nepal was a common practice in the court ateliers under the Qianlong emperor. A good number of such stylistic copies is preserved in the Palace Museum **(figs. 109, 110)** and in the Yonghegong temple, Beijing **(figs. 111, 112).**[223] That similar early Kashmir style statues may not have been brought only from the then "northwestern frontier" areas of Gilgit, but also from Buddhist Khotan during the ca. 8th century is illustrated by a Shakyamuni statue in the Khotan museum **(fig. 113).** The imitation of foreign "ideal" styles, especially Pala-Indian and Nepalese, was of course practised in Tibet proper as well. A vast material can be seen for example at Tashi Lhünpo monastery, including entire series of Newar style bodhisattvas of a local 18th (?) century mass production **(fig. 114).**

In 2005 I was able to see a hitherto "unknown" Kashmir style statue in the gZim khang on the upper floor of the Lhasa Ramoche. The 87 cm tall brass image of exceptional quality represents a crowned Shakyamuni, and can be dated on stylistic grounds to the ca. 11th century, probably once brought to Lhasa from Western Tibet **(fig. 6).** Another so far hidden treasure of later Kashmir style sculptural art from the western Tibetan-Nepalese borderlands turned up in an American private collection in 2003: a smaller version in gilt brass, copper and silver of the "Three Silver Brothers" (dngul sku mched gsum), a highly revered monumental statue group at Kha char monastery (Nepali: Khojarnath) located some 20 km east of present sTag la mkhar or better known in its Nepali version as Taklakot, the ancient capital of Puhrang near the modern border to western Nepal (fig.115).

[223] See for two other Kashmir style copies a 69 cm high Shakyamuni image in the Palace Museum, Beijing, Wang Jiapeng 2003, no.233, and a Shakyamuni once in the Putuo Zongchen temple at the imperial summer residence at Chengde (G.Béguin, Trésors de Mongolie, XVIIe-XIXe siècles, Paris 1993, p.160). Cf also Henss 2004 (Tibet Journal), plates 4-8.

Though largely restored and remade in later times the three bodhisattvas Avalokiteshvara (center), Manjushri and Maitreya at Kha char can be traced back to the foundation period of this once very popular pilgrimage site at around 996 and to the early 13th century. The replica, an unrivalled masterpiece of a western Tibetan-Nepalese artistic joint venture dating to the first half of the 13th century recalls somehow the refined and decorative late Kashmir style of the Alchi wall-paintings in Ladakh towards the end of this grand art tradition in the western Himalayas.[224]

While Buddhist statuary in eastern Tibet has not been included in BST, where too much priority is given to pre-15th century images anyway, the sculpture of western Tibet is only represented by its Kashmir-dominated first golden age of the 10th through 12th centuries, but not by a single statue from the later periods such as from the second half of the 13th and from the mid-15th to early 16th century (Tholing, Tsaparang; **figs. 116, 117**).[225]

While I had questioned von Schroeder's earlier attribution (1981) of many 13th through 15th century non-Kashmir style statues to Western Tibet already in the 1980s, a more detailed comment to that hypothesis was published only some years ago (see Henss 2002). The myth, however, of the "Western Tibetan bronzes", introduced at a time when our experience with Tibetan art was indeed more limited than today, has been longlasting and is, when it comes to the specific crowned tathagata Buddha type of that period, still alive here and there. Even twenty years later the author prefered to avoid a clear statement on this issue, although the related images documented in BST are no longer labelled as "Western Tibet". Among those scholars upholding that myth was also Chandra L.Reedy, whose book *"Himalayan Bronzes". Technology, Style, and Choices"* (1997) has been supposed to give further and final

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[224] See for a more detailed study Heller 2003. Heller's dating of the Pritzker group to circa 1220 is, however, largely based on a legendary historical tradition and not on a thoroughful stylistic analysis, but still appears to meet the right period. Pal 2003, no.87, and Henss in this publication (Part I), Monasteries Open Their Treasure Rooms, no.114.

[225] See for a recent survey of western Tibetan sculpture Henss 2002.

directions and references to determine the regional provenance of some 340 statues by analysing their metal alloys, techniques of manufacture, and casting centers(!). While, so Reedy, the data of "technological styles" were meant, at least in general, to complement the "visual style" of an image, the "Western Tibetan" material alone has questioned in my opinion considerably the method and results of her "technological choices". Authentic images from the Central Regions, Ü and Tsang, are attributed by Reedy – apparently adopting largely so-called stylistic claims by other authors as "settled"(!) – to "Western Tibet" (W 134, 136, 140, 142-144, 146-156, etc) and statues of definetive Western Tibetan origin are labelled as "Central Tibet" (C159-162). One of the major shortcomings of this problematic book is that dubious attributions to Western Tibet were accepted and "confirmed" before the author was going to set up her "technological choices".

Establishing regional attributions for Tibetan art presupposes in many more cases than actually feasible that local styles do exist. Art history and the artist's practice does not, however, always correspond to our academic ambitions. Artisans and ateliers were not "immobilia", but moving around and working at various places for different patrons, adapting and assimilating other regional and foreign aesthetic and technical patterns to a more - complex and non-regional – style than modern scholarship is able to recognize and identify. And what is the sense to label a Milarepa brass image without any Kashmirian features ("technical data clearly assign this piece to the Kashmir group") as "Kashmir, 14th century or later", when – purely speculative – a Kashmiri artist may have "produced the piece in a workshop in Tibet from metal he brought or imported himself" (! Reedy, p.174f., K.100)?

What Reedy (W 141) copied after Deborah Klimburg-Salter (The Silk Road and the Diamond Path, Los Angeles 1982, pl.82) for a seated Shakyamuni in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, was introduced by Amy Heller (2008, no.52) into her new catalogue as: "possibly Ladakh, 12th-13th century". Although I am not able to suggest another more precise regional attribution and it cannot be completely

ruled out that this image of a certain provincial quality was manufactured somewhere in the western Himalayas, the arguments of all three authors concerning this statue are not really conclusive and their comparisons don't go beyond coincidental similarities. Not any other existing metal sculpture of this style is known from Western Tibet Guge and "Indian Tibet" (Ladakh, Spiti, Lahoul). While all statuary in those regions until the ca. mid-13th century is reflecting the stylistic formulas of the grand Kashmirian tradition, the Oxford Shakyamuni represents what has been called an international Central Tibetan style, which in the course of the increasing missions of the new Buddhist schools from the Central Regions to the Tibetan borderlands in the far East and West, be it up to Guge or Ladakh since the early 13th century, be it as far as to the Tangut Xixia Kingdom already before, provided a new normative artistic language.

This did not work of course from one year to the other. And in view of a quite common retardive provincial factor and of the ususally considerable distance from the inspiring and formative heartland of these "Indo-Tibetan" art traditions, then the Central Regions of Tibet, the new painting styles in the foreign lands were often late and longerlasting such as in the "New Temple" at Alchi (Lha khang so ma), or in similar shrines and stupas at Lamayuru, Wanla, and Tabo, all in Ladakh and Spiti, dating to the late 13th or to the 14th century. When seeing the broad shovel-shaped head of the Ashmolean Buddha (recalling similar facial proportions in southern Tibetan murals of the 14th century) and its protruding ears one may even think of an individual later Tibetan version after a 12th century Pala-Indian prototype such as Vajrāsana Buddha in the Potala Palace (BST, p.307A) and at least five other related brass statues. The latter image is certainly not as von Schroeder says of "Tibetan origin and, bearing a Śāradā inscription, therefore "cast in the western Himalayas"(!), but made no doubt in India and brought to Tibet, where once, probably not much before around 1300, also the tiny Vairocana (Heller 2008, no.40) was copied at an unknown site– and without any distinctive "Western Tibetan" characteristics (though claimed by Heller) – and placed inside the 28 cm large Shakyamuni as

part of the original consecration ritual. – Thus nothing definetive of an alleged Ladakhi origin of the enigmatic Oxford Buddha may remain for the time being. Would its present attribution turn out to be another "Western Tibetan" myth? –

A standing Tara in the same Oxford collection described by Heller (2008, no.50; brass, height: 19 cm) as "Western Tibet, ca. 1050-1150", represents in my opinion no more Western Tibet (Guge, Spiti, Ladakh), and certainly not "Ladakh", but the later Kashmir offsprings in the Indian Himalayan border areas of the middle Sutlej river valley in Himachal Pradesh.

Except the greater artistic centers and traditions like Kashmir, Western Tibet and Nepal (Kathmandu Valley) hardly any regional styles over a larger period could be verified for Buddhist sculptures in Tibet (even not in BST) except for example at Densa Thil and related places like Drigung monastery in the 14th and 15th century. No casting centers could so far be identified for the many and popular "tathāgata type" brass statues of the 13th through 15th century. Specific sculptural styles such as of the monumental 11th century clay image cycles at Yemar (gYe dmar) and at once neighbouring sites to the South of Gyantse were also favoured at Shalu and a few decades later on at Drathang (Grwa thang), but not for example at the same time in the Lhasa Jokhang (rear Buddha Thub pa gangs chen mtsho rgyal and twelve bodhisattvas in the main sanctum of the Jo bo Shakyamuni).

Not much different is the case for Tibetan painting. Only at major cultural sites such as Gyantse existed a disctinctive local painting style and school in the 15th century, which next to the grand murals also characterised its "mobile art" like painted scrolls and giant appliqué banners. A Sakya inspired and dominated tradition of lineage thangkas and mandala paintings (painted scrolls and murals) between the later 13th and the early 17th century can be associated with the Tsang province (Sakya, Shalu, Gyantse, Ngor), whereas the now lost mandalas (of around or after ca. 1409) were painted in a different stylistic idiom than the contemporary murals in Gyantse (1425) and the mandala thangka

from Ngor monastery (around or after 1429). An even more regional "school" in southwestern Tsang can be recognized at Narthang,Jonang Püntsoling (Kumbum stupa), Gyang (Lhatse district), and at Chung Riwoche during the 14th and 15th century. Other individual painting cycles like the extraordinary Indian style wall-paintings at Püntsoling (Phun tshogs gling, 1618/20) must be attributed to a special short-period atelier rather than to a more persistant local art tradition. –

At places such as Gongkar (Gong dkar) monastery in Ü province one may hesitate to characterise from a modern eye-view the pioneering murals by Khyentse (mKhyen brtse) and his workshop from sometime after 1464 as a unique art style only practised here because of too many losses of cultural relics, be it on a "natural way" by decay or later repainting in the course of the centuries, be it by the devastations during the "Cultural Revolution" 1966-1976. – More relevant than an actual regional attribution of a statue or of a painting was the selective practice of specific stylistic traditions, which can be only partly – and originally – related to distinctive geographic areas like the Karmagadri (Kar ma sgar bris) painting style with eastern Tibet since the 16th century.

Recent field work and research in and on the ancient western Tibetan kingdom of Zhang Zhung has contributed significantly to establish a more precise profile on the way from legend to history. However it did not reveal any imagery to support von Schroeder's hypothesis of a separate Buddhist art production in this cultural no-man's-land during the 7th and 8th century. While John Vincent Bellezza's extensive explorations in loco have covered the entire Chantang plains up to the Far West, a first archaeological survey in search of Zhang Zhung was carried out by Prof. Li Yongxian in 2004 at the site of ancient Khyunglung, the traditional "capital" of that enigmatic empire during the first millenium. The only figural objects so far excavated in the whole area is a small archaic bronze image of unidentifiable pre-Buddhist(?) iconography, which is

far away from the western Tibetan "Zhang Zhung group" as suggested by von Schroeder.[226]

In view of the enormous volume of the author's "Buddhist Sculptures Unlimited" one would have appreciated more comparative text entries, both in style and iconography, to the individual works of art with references to other statues inside and outside Tibet. – Another and for the precious stone inlays even more elaborate and better preserved tathāgata set in the Pala Kurkihar style of the 11th century like BST 78-81 (Potala Palace) is kept in the Palace Museum, Beijing **(figs. 118, 119).**[227] Both groups can be attributed to the same Indian workshop. The tradition to produce metal statues with multicoloured inlaid stones goes back to Pala ateliers of that period and was taken up by the Newar artists with an unsurpassable aesthetic beauty and technical skill in the 12th century for the next twohundred years. Early reports from the 7th century Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang (between 629-645), who mentions "a figure of Buddha made of brass, ornamented with rare jewels"[228], cannot be illustrated by surviving images.

Next to Nepal and Tibet the impact of Indian Pala statuary on neighbouring areas was most effective in the art of Pagan during the late 11th until the 13th century. Like a few preserved paintings and some more statues brought from India to Tibet during the 11th and 12th century the Pala style sculptuers and paintings of Pagan may help to reconstruct what has been lost at the source, in Bodhgaya or Nalanda and be-

[226] J. V. Bellezza, Zhang Zhung. Foundations of Civilization in Tibet. A Historical and Ethnoarchaeological Study of the Monuments, Rock Art and Oral Tradition of the Ancient Tibetan Upland. Vienna 2008; and Li Yongxian, The Archaeological Findings in Khyung lung dngal mKhar. Paper given at the Second International Conference on Tibetan Archaeology and Art, Beijing 2004; cf. Henss 2006 (Conference Report), p. 584-586, and Henss 2006. Huo Wei/Li Yongxian, New Archaeological Finds in Xiang quanhe River Valley. China's Tibet, no.4, 2005, p.43.

[227] Wang Jiapeng 2002, nos. 6,9,11,13,24, and Wang Jiapeng 2003, nos. 68-72, and no.65 (Vairocana), which apparently belongs to the Potala set.

[228] S. Beal, Si Yu Ki. Buddhist Records of the Western World (London 1884). Delhi 1981, p.123.

yond. An extraordinary hoard of about 200 superb miniature carvings produced by local artists at Pagan (many inscribed in Burmese) in a pure Indian Pala style of the late 11th or 12th century became known only in the last years.[229] These finely carved votif tablets were made of a yellow-beige pyrophyllite stone known in Burmese as andagū and were thus labelled as "Andagū reliefs" **(fig. 120).**

A very homogenous group in iconographiy, style and material now kept in several private Burmese collections, they were apparently all found in one cachette, probably once manufactured as a royal commission and donation. Many of them are depicting the major events of the Buddha's life, several of rare iconographiy such as the emaciated Buddha, the Buddha in the "European" sitting posture or standing in a Mahābodhi temple-like shrine, or a Walking Buddha. Though not part of "Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet" the Andagū tablets make an exceptional addition to the corpus of Pala style miniature carvings – and a new chapter in the Buddhist art history of South Asia and beyond.

Coming back once again to Densa Thil monastery[230] some recent discoveries and studies have contributed to bring together what has been dispersed or lost during the "Cultural Revolution" at this most significant monastic site. Among the individual statues two guardians, a Vaiśravana now in the Lhasa Ramoche, and a Virū-pākṣa brought to Beijing and now on display in the Capital Museum, can be identified with photos taken by Francesco Mele during the Tucci expedition in 1948 **(figs. 77, 78a)**

For a reconstruction and the iconography of the tashigomang (bKra shis sgo mang) memorial stupa type at Densa Thil (as it was before 1966)

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[229] See Bautze-Picron 2006. I am grateful to Claudine Bautze-Picron, who is preparing a major publication of the Andagu tablets, to have shown me many more photographs of these unique treasures than so far published.

[230] See our observations on the Densa Thil Statuary here p.80 ff. in the review on "Tibet – Monasteries Open Their Treasure Rooms". Of great help have been here the recent studies by Olaf Czaja (cf. Czaja 2006, and 2007/2008).

based on numerous surviving fragments, text sources and on the few Mele photographs we refer here to the second chapter in this book (Tibet. Monasteries Open Their Treasure Rooms). A comprehensive compilation, identification and reconstruction of all existing fragments from Densa Thil scattered over various public and private collections would be a major desideratum in order to document and to preserve whatever is left from one of the most important sites of Tibet's cultural heritage.

Like Ganden monastery is Densa Thil synonymous for the iconoclasm of the 1960s in Tibet. Thousands of images were destroyed, desecrated or deprived of their blessing energy, their gold ornaments removed and melted down. From 600 tons of sacred icons transported for their metal value to factories in Beijing, Tianjin or Shanghai less than ten percent or 13.537 statues and fragments had been recovered in 1973 to be stored for another ten years in the Forbidden City or in the Confucius temple and sent back to Lhasa in 1983. Several thousand cultural relics are left in the new Beijing Capital Museum, with a well-presented selection on display from Densa Thil and beyond, yet many still packed up as they had come some fourty years ago: hidden treasures and visual documents of Tibet's golden history and recent past, for sheer delight to see and liberation by viewing, for future exploration and further insight on ancient treasures.

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81 Medical thangka. Original set, between 1687-1703. Lhasa, Mentsikhang (sMan rtsis khang). Photo: Michael Henss, 1981)

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"This is the religious donation of the wife of the army commander Ṣālakā (?), Ra + oyāmāvati together with the mother Padmamukhā, her sons Muḍusiṃgha and Puṇyasiṃgha Khukhathāla and of the best beneficial friend Endratrāta. The religious merit may be with all sentient beings. Vimuktatrāta" (reading and translation into German by Oskar von Hinüber). - Khotan, Museum (Xinjiang Autonomous Region, China). Excavated at Damagou (Qira). - Photo: after The Ancient Art in Xinjiang, China. Beijing 1994, fig.117.

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129 White Tara. Brass; height: 13,5 cm. A characteristic image in the Western Tibetan style from Guge, around 1500. Phiyang (Phyi dbang) monastery, Ladakh. Photo: after A. Binczik/R. Fischer: Hidden Treasures from Ladakh. München 2002, p.300.

130 Two paintings of a monk. Canvas, ca. 60x20 cm. Tibet, $8^{th}/9^{th}$ century (radiocarbon-tested). Private collection, London. Photo: courtesy F.Roncoroni.

131 Butter lamp. Brass; height: 102,5 cm, diameter 102 cm. With six-character inscription Da Ming Jing tai nian zhi ("produced during the reign period of the Jingtai emperor"). Beijing, between 1450-1457. Private collection, Gouda / Netherlands. Currently on loan at the World Museum, Rotterdam. Photo: courtesy of the owner.